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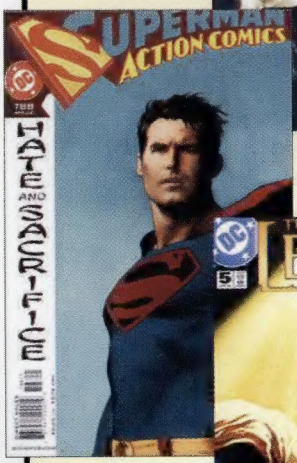

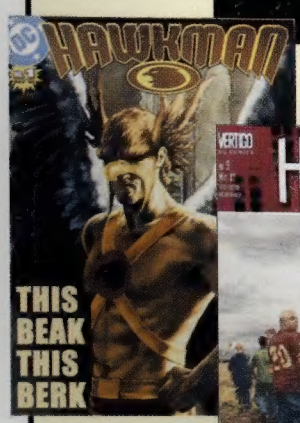

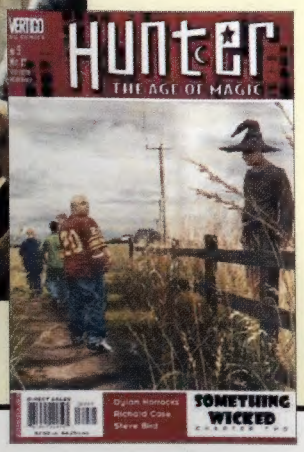

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A Quality Communications magazine

#150 OCTOBER 2002

Inside this issue...

COVER: Following their tabloid one-shots on DC's top superhero icons, writer Paul Dini and artist Alex Ross are now producing a December-shipping special examining the key members of the Justice League of America. For the full story on **JLA: Secret Origins** and the 2003 follow-up, **JLA: Liberty and Justice**, see page 10

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Sez Dez

Editorial
Dez Skinn

IT'S OUR 150th, almost 13 years of continuous reporting on what's what in the wacky world of comics, and the longest I've lasted at anything. So, instead of waxing lyrically about the pros and cons of comics, just this once I'm using this column as a rundown on what's happening with our very own publishing company – items that you won't see covered elsewhere.

As well as publishing **Comics International** every four weeks, there have been quite a few extra activities Quality Communications has been involved in, update checklist follows...

CI's news editor, Mike Conroy, is too modest to mention it in his own pages, but he's spent the last few months meticulously researching his first book, due out just before Christmas. Entitled **500 Great Comicbook Action Heroes**, it features an intro by Will Eisner and an assorted rundown on the world's top comics characters from Mike, ably assisted by **Babylon 5** artist David Roach, **From the Tomb**'s Peter Normanton, UK comics historian Tony Hitchman and our very own David Bishop, Paul Gravett, Tim Pilcher and yours truly. All wrapped up in a John Watson cover, for a mere £9.99.

Also, John Watson fans should watch out for his first DC cover coming up soon on an issue of **Hawkman**.

Despite Quality having focused exclusively on **CI** for so long, now that we're firmly entrenched in England's equivalent of San Francisco, that's about to change. We've two fascinating books of our own coming up soon, not the least being a mammoth 416 page epic. We'll be giving you tasters of things to come in **CI** soon, with chapters of Rob Kirby's History of Marvel UK and Peter Hansen's book on British comics fandom.

If that isn't enough, there's a Quality project which has been on and off for the last two years which is soon to be launched. It's the company's most ambitious undertaking to date, being a newsstand 100 page glossy full colour monthly which is sure to shock everybody.

And then there's always **Warrior**.

Comics International *editor Dez Skinn's career in the industry spans over 30 years. Titles he has created include* ***Doctor Who Weekly, House of Hammer, Hulk Comic, Starburst*** *and* ***Warrior****. Ex-editorial director of Marvel UK – where his Stan Lee-coined Sez Dez column had a monthly audience of over 500,000 – he has also edited titles including* ***Buster, Conan, MAD, Star Wars Weekly, 2000 AD Presents, Miracleman*** *and* ***Spider-Man*** *and won over 20 Eagle Awards. His co-created* ***V for Vendetta*** *is still under option to Warner Bros.*

DC's top teams in replay of yearly Silver Age gatherings

JSA writers and Fantastic Four artist reunite Justice League of America with Justice Society of America

DAVID S Goyer and Geoff Johns are working with Spanish penciller Carlos Pacheco on a prestige project reminiscent of the annual Justice League of America/Justice Society of America crossovers that began with 1963's classic *Crisis on Earth-One* two-parter [**Justice League of America** #21-22].

Titled **JLA/JSA: Virtue and Vice** is a 96-page hardcover graphic novel inked by Jesús Meriño – who worked with Pacheco on **Avengers Forever** and **Fantastic Four**. The one-shot sets out to show that even heroes have their flaws.

Seven deadly sins

Preceded by a stage-setting story in **JLA/JSA Secret Files #1** *[see below]*, the tale has seven members of the Justice League and the Justice Society each succumbing to one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

The remaining members of the two teams then find themselves up against the villainous uber-team formed by their affected comrades. Simultaneously, while trying to find out who is behind the transformation, the combined heroes must discover how it was achieved.

"People have been asking for it and we've been dying to do it," was Johns' simple response when asked how the project came about. His description of the story's basic premise was equally succinct. "The modern JLA and the modern JSA team-up for a grand-scale adventure that focuses on teamwork, betrayal, virtue and vice."

Time travel is out

"We wanted to write a classic superhero story that provides the fans with all of the moments and match-ups they would expect, and then some," added Goyer, who co-writes the monthly **JSA** title with Johns. "One other thing – *no time travel*! There's been too much of that of late!"

Variant editions

DC has no plans to release a softcover edition of **JLA/JSA: Virtue and Vice** earlier than June 2003. However Dynamic Forces – obviously holding the co-author in high regard – is offering a limited number of copies of the regular hardcover signed by Johns, for an extra $25.04, at $49.99.

***JLA/JSA: Virtue and Vice** hardcover, priced $24.95, ships on December 4.*

JLA/JSA secrets revealed

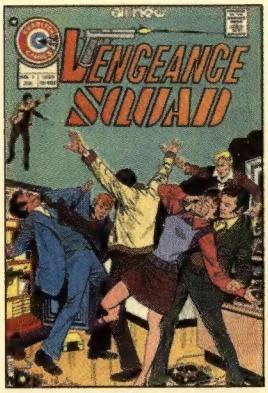
EX-**JSA** penciller Stephen Sadowski is returning to DC's original super-team to draw a story for the **JLA/JSA Secret Files** one-shot.

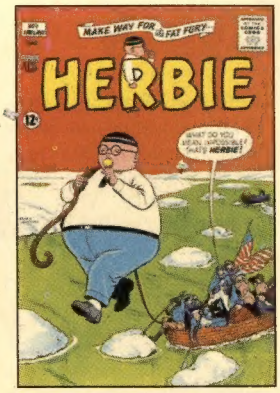
Written by **JSA** co-authors Geoff Johns and David S Goyer and inked by **X-Men Forever**'s Andrew Pepoy, the strip – which acts as a prelude to **JLA/JSA: Virtue and Vice** – reveals previously unknown connections between the two super-teams.

Also included in the special is a story in which Metamorpho returns to life. Written by Rich **(Roachmill)** Hedden, it is drawn by **Howard the Duck**'s Phil Winslade. The special also has a story by top Justice Society fan Jim Beard – founder of the now defunct JSA Appreciation Association – together with newcomer Clement Sauve and Serge **(Avengelyne/Demonslayer)** LaPointe which tells of a squabble between the JLA and JSA over a member of Young Justice. **Chase** co-creators Dan Curtis Johnson and J H Williams III contribute by revealing the secrets of the mole hunt – a continuing feature in this year's **Secret Files**.

JLA/JSA Secret Files also contains a prelude to the forthcoming **Aquaman** series. Written by Rick Veitch, it is drawn by **Nightman/Gambit**'s Dietrich Smith. A preview of **JLA/Avengers** by George Perez is also included.

*Above: Carlos Pacheco and Jesús Meriño's art for the wraparound cover to DC's **JLA/JSA Secret Files** one-shot. Priced $4.95, the 64-pager ships on November 6.*





Charlton set to resurface

THE LAST of the major comics publishers of the 1940s and '50s to fold is set to make a comeback.

Premiering in 1945 with **Zoo Funnies** #1, Charlton Comics published a diverse line that encompassed horror, romance, superheroes, funny animals, westerns, TV tie-ins and more before it finally closed its doors in 1994.

Although DC acquired the rights to Captain Atom, Blue Beetle and Charlton's other superheroes, most of the company's other properties are now owned by Roger Broughton. The Canadian publisher, who also owns ACG's assets has merged with film production and graphic companies to form Charlton Media Group.

The new entity plans to develop characters for film, TV and comics with four titles being lined up to launch in 2003. According to the publisher these are likely to be **Vengeance Squad**, **Herbie** [ex-ACG], **Atomic Mouse** and a horror anthology that is, he says, a little more cutting edge than Charlton's original horror titles were.

Movie and novel spin-offs follow Red Star to CGE

CROSSGEN Entertainment – CrossGeneration Comics' recently announced creator-participation imprint – has gained its second and third titles

Following the decision by Christian Gossett and his team to take their former Image series, **Red Star** to CGE, Hurricane Entertain-ment has followed suit. Shortly after heralding its forth-coming tie-in to 1981's *Escape from New York* movie, the company – which publishes **Violent Cases** via Image – said **John Carpenter's Snake Plissken Chronicles** would be moving to the CrossGen offshoot.

*Above: Ron Wagner's promo art for the CGE comicbook series based on R A Salvatore's **DemonWars** novels.*

Hurricane's announcement came only days before CGE reached agreement with R A Salvatore to publish a series based on the fantasy author's **DemonWars** novels under its Code 6 imprint.

Written by **Windchaser** author Scott Ciencin, with art by Ron (**Morbius**) Wagner, it is to be released in six-issue story arcs for repackaging as trade paper-backs.

Outreach potential

"This deal was a no-brainer because of its nearly unlimited potential to expand the marketplace for CrossGen and for comics overall," explained CGE's director of business deve-lopment, Ian Feller. "There are six existing books in the **DemonWars** saga and a new one on the way. We hope to draw readers of those into comic stores to buy the **DemonWars** comic and hopefully others."

Salvatore is a **New York Times** best-selling author, so the outreach potential is enormous but the comics may prove too expensive. His novels retail at $7 where a complete six issue story of Code 6's **DemonWars** title is likely to cost about $18.

Creeper remodelled for Paris in 1920s

STEVE (**Amazing Spider-Man**) Ditko's 1968 creation, the Creeper, is to get a Vertigo makeover that will leave the new version with nothing in common with the original, beyond the name.

Set for release early next year, the five-issue **Beware the Creeper** is set in 1920s Paris and features a woman in the title role. Written by Jason (**Pistolwhip**) Hall and drawn by Cliff Chiang who drew *Josie Mac: Lost Voices*, the Judd Winick-written back up in **Detective Comics** #763-772.

Describing the series as mysterious, sexy, psycho-logical, and emotional, Hall said that, despite its setting and its female protagonist, "It doesn't go against anything that's already been established with the Jack Ryder version. In fact, there's a subtle nod here and there to all that – as I love those little continuity touches as much as everyone else.

"This is a Vertigo book for comic readers of all types," the writer added, predictably. "And whether you're a Creeper fan or don't know the first thing about the character – you don't need to – you'll definitely want to check this out."

*Above: Cliff Chiang's promo art for DC/Vertigo's **Beware the Creeper** five-parter.*

X-Treme X-Men X-Posed

MARVEL'S latest ongoing X-title is to go on hiatus until 2003, replaced by a two-issue microseries.

With October's **X-Treme X-Men** #19, the mutant team's quest to locate the *Libris Veritatus* – the 13-volume diary of the late mutant, Destiny – will be complete and the series is to make way for **X-Treme X-Men: X-Pose**. Written by X-meister Chris Claremont, the two-parter is drawn by **2000 AD** *Button Man* artist Arthur Ranson, who also drew the recent four-issue **X-Factor** revival.

"In **X-Pose** tele-vision journalists are studying mutantkind, and they naturally look to the X-Men as the most obvious candidates for a special," explained editor Andrew Lis. "This view from the outside will help us illustrate the differences between the various X-teams."

***X-Treme X-Men: X-Pose** #1, priced $2.99, ships in November.*

In Brief

THE Ultimates' Mark Millar is writing the first crossover between two of Marvel's *Ultimate* titles. Launching in December, **Ultimate X-Men vs The Ultimates** is a miniseries drawn by Chris (**Generation X**) Bachalo.

FOLLOWING the sellout success of their #0 issue, **Brother Matthew**'s Arvid Nelson and artist Eric J are to launch an on-going **Rex Mundi** series. The first issue is set to ship from Image in December.

MAD Magazine has begun a search for a cartoonist to create a new monthly feature to replace the late Dave Berg's *The Lighter Side of...*

"We're looking for a cartoonist whose unique voice and offbeat view of the world will transform the feature into a **MAD** classic for a new generation," said co-editor John Ficarra. "A background in ballroom dancing is not mandatory but an obvious plus."

Similar to Berg's strip, the feature to be developed should share the original's mission of commenting on contemporary culture, but with a new cast of characters and situations.

Further information is available at the **MAD** website at madmag.com.

TO DIFFERENTIATE it from the recently-launched **Star Wars: Empire** comic, Dark Horse is adding a **Republic** suffix to its existing ongoing **Star Wars** title.

The change kicks in with #46 which ships on September 16 priced $2.99.

GREEN Lantern writer Judd Winick is to make his Vertigo debut with **Blood and Water**, a six-parter set in San Francisco.

Illustrated by **Nightfall: The Black Chronicles**' Tomm Coker, it focuses on Adam Cohen. Once a happy, healthy young man but now dying of a variety of illnesses, he learns that his best friends have found the key to eternal life in... vampirism.

DARK Horse has obtained the comicbook rights to the currently on release *Reign of Fire* movie.

The **Star Wars** publisher has both a prequel and sequel to the SF/fantasy film – set in a future where fire breathing dragons rule the Earth – in development for next year.

THE **Witchblade: Obekamono** writer/artist team of Fiona Avery and Billy Tan are reuniting for the tentatively titled **Tomb Raider: Arabian Knights**. The Image/Top Cow project is being lined up for summer 2002 release.

ARCADE Comics has acquired the licence to *Alias*, the ABC TV show created, written, produced and directed by J J Abrams and starring Jennifer Garner.

Currently unscheduled, the comic is to be written by Abrams. It is the second title for the newly-formed Rob Liefeld venture behind **Youngblood: Bloodsport**. Written by **The Ultimates'** Mark Millar, this revival of the maiden Image series is drawn by former **X-Force** artist Liefeld.

One creature, two Slayers

TOMB of Dracula artist Gene Colan is collaborating on a one-shot that introduces yet another of Buffy the Vampire Slayer's predecessors.

A follow up to last year's **Tales of the Slayer** anthology, **Broken Bottle of Djinn** also features art by Jeff Matsuda. The story switches between the slums of 1930s New York and contemporary Sunnydale with Colan illustrating the earlier sequences and Matsuda the modern.

The one-shot comic is authored by Doug Petrie and Jane Espenson, both of them being staff writers on the *Buffy* TV show. They chronicle parallel tales in which – separated by more than 60 years – Buffy Summers and her Depression Era equivalent each go up against the same creature.

The cover (pictured left) features Matsuda's manga-esque version of Buffy on a Gene Colan backdrop. As with all Dark Horse TV spin-offs, a photo-cover variant is also being produced.

Best known for his covers to Dark Horse's monthly **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** comic, **Broken Bottle of Djinn** features Matsuda's first interior story pages.

***Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Tales of the Slayer – Broken Bottle of Djinn**, priced $3.50, ships on October 16.*

Dini works magic at Vertigo

A FORMER member of the Justice League of America is to get a Vertigo revamp by Paul Dini, a writer more readily associated with the tabloid format specials on such icons as Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman he produced with award-winning artist Alex Ross.

Describing his **Zatanna: Every Day Magic** one-shot, Dini said, "It's about jealous witches, shadow demons, slob ex-boyfriends, judgmental rabbits, one-night stands, white gloves, black fishnets, Thelonious Monk, a tank full of very sad-looking toads, envy, forgiveness, sex, and a chatty audience volunteer who blows up real good."

A producer/writer on the animated *Batman* TV series, Dini said the currently unscheduled special – drawn by Rick (**Kabuki**) Mays – also features **Hellblazer**'s John Constantine, a former lover of the mistress of magic. Dini describes Zatanna as one of the most powerful magic users in the DC/Vertigo universe. "She's right up there with Dr. Fate, Tim Hunter and Faust in terms of mystic ability."

*Above: Brian Bolland's cover art for Vertigo's **Zatanna** one-shot.*

JUST AS Superman group editor Eddie Berganza is implementing a move away from manga-influenced art on The Man of Steel's four core titles, Marvel's

*Mike Marts is flying in the face of fashion by bringing in a Japanese superstar to draw one of the House of Ideas' top-selling titles. **Silent Mobius** creator Kia*

*Asamiya is to be a regular artist on **Uncanny X-Men**, alternating on story arcs with the series' current penciller, Ron Garney. His first issue is the December-*

shipping #416. Pictured [from top to bottom] are Asamiya's character designs for the Angel, Iceman, Nightcrawler and Northstar.

For the full picture...

...of **Hawkman #1** in VFN-, see our September catalogue where we present over 350 lots of US Golden Age, Silver Age and rare British comics.

Our September catalogue is online at **www.compalcomics.com** from **28th August** to **Tuesday 10th September.** For a posted copy, please send £2 in stamps to the address below.

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IDW to launch CSI TV spin-off title

AS A crime novelist with a long and distinguished career behind him, **The Road to Perdition** author Max Allan Collins is an ideal choice to write IDW Publishing's first TV spin-off title.

The **30 Days of Night** publisher has acquired the rights to CBS's *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. Collins – already familiar with the source material having written two **CSI** novels – is lined up to write the comic which debuts with a five-issue miniseries.

The series is being drawn by newcomer Gabriel Rodriquez with cover artist Ashley (**Hellspawn**) Wood also providing stylised presentations of the forensic and flashback sequences – in keeping with the way such scenes are filmed for the TV show.

● Collins – whose comics credentials include **Ms Tree** and the *Dick Tracy* newspaper strip, is also working with Kia Asamiya, rewriting the manga creator's 300-page **Batman: Child of Dreams** for US readers.

***CSI: Crime Scene Investigation** #1, priced $3.99, ships in December.*

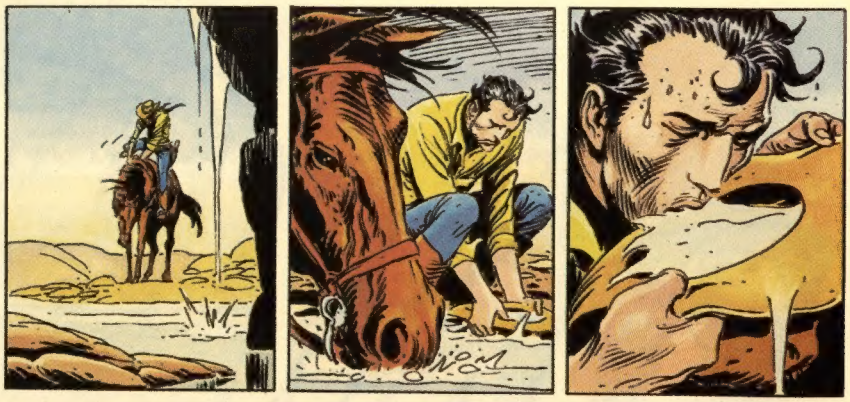
UK indie revived

*Above: Alex Paterson and Simon Ecob's cover art for **The Maiden America Special**.*

ARMAGEDDON Patrol's leader, Maiden America, is to go solo as UK publisher Alchemy Texts revives its two-year old comic that asks "What if super-heroes had fought in Vietnam?".

Written by John A Short and drawn by Alex Paterson and Simon Ecob, the black and white **Maiden America Special** is to be followed by two further one-shots: **The Fatal Mistakes Special** in December and **The Life and Death Special** in 2003.

***The Maiden America Special**, priced $2.95, ships in September.*

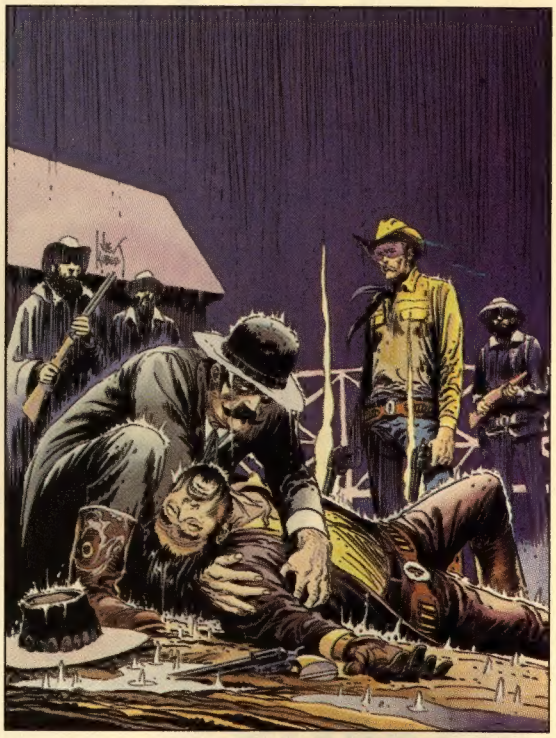


Kubert rides west for Italy

JOE Kubert is possibly best known for his collaborations with writer Robert Kanigher on such popular DC World War II strips as Sgt Rock and Enemy Ace; for drawing the Silver Age revival of Hawkman; and his artist sons, Adam and Andy, but less for his western comics work. Now Kubert is returning to the genre he has sporadically contributed to since the start of his career.

Having drawn for **Jesse James** (Avon; 1950-'56), *Firehair* for DC's **Showcase** (1968) and for **Son of Tomahawk** (DC; 1970), Joe Kubert is now working with **Tex** writer Claudio Nizzi on the western epic – **The Four Killers**.

The first volume: **The Barrett Brothers** will be published in hardcover by Dark Horse's Venture imprint – a partnership with **Tex** licensing agents Strip Art Features. It is an English-language version of a graphic novel first issued in Europe earlier this year.



*Pictured cover (above) and interior pages from **The Four Killers** volume 1: **The Barrett Brothers**; art by Joe Kubert.*

Murdering outlaws

The album-sized 48-pager – **The Barrett Brothers** – recounts how Tex Willer, a Texas Ranger, takes off on the trail of a quartet of ruthless outlaws who massacred a family the Ranger knew well. As the four killers – three whites and a Native American – head off in different directions, the subsequent, and unscheduled, albums in the series will follow Willer as he hunts each one down separately.

Kubert – founder and head of The Joe Kubert School of Cartoon & Graphic Art – has been working on the 224-page **The Four Killers** saga since 1995.

Tex Fact File

While the Italian western hero's English-language exposure has been extremely limited, more than half a billion **Tex** graphic albums have been sold worldwide.

Created in 1948 by Gianluigi Bonnelli and published by his wife Tea, Tex Willer's popularity soared in the late 1950s when the Bonellis replaced the original small-format comic with a large squarebound paperback-style book.

Initially drawn by Aurelio Galleppini – or Galep as he was better known – the **Tex** series has also been illustrated by Ferdinando Fusco, Guglielmo Letteri and Jesus Blasco among 'others. Similarly, while Bonelli was the title's principal writer for decades, more recently such creators as Claudio Nizzi and Mauro Boselli have become the comic's regular scripters.

***The Four Killers** volume 1: **The Barrett Brothers** hardcover, priced $14.94, ships on November 27.*

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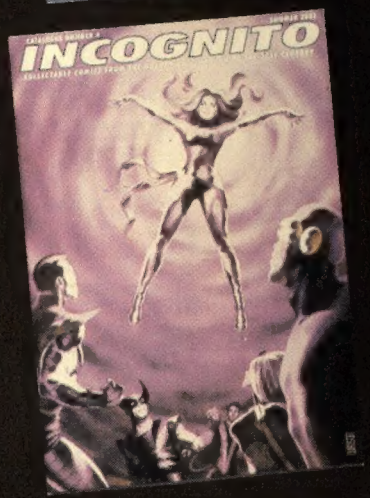

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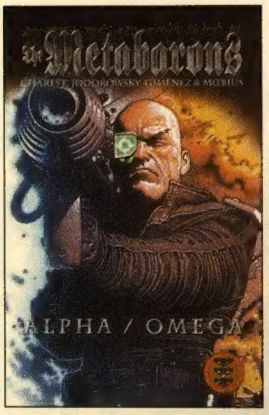
Charest on Metabarons

ORIGINALLY intended for an end of 2002 release, Travis Charest's **Dreamshifters**, his long-awaited **Metabarons** spin-off, is still not complete.

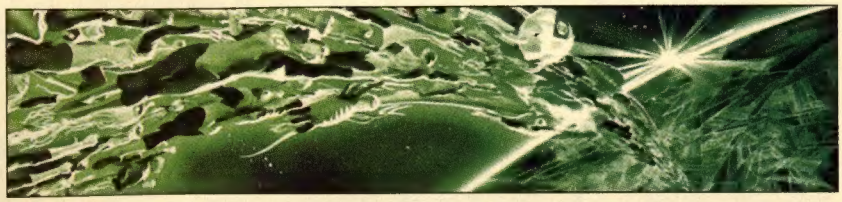


To bridge the gap until the Alexandro Jodorowsky-written four-parter is ready for publication, Humanoids is featuring a prelude to the mini illustrated by the former **WildC.A.T.S** artist in the 48-page **The Metabarons: Alpha/Omega**.

The collection also includes a previously unseen story drawn by **Metabarons** regular Juan Gimenez plus a second Gimenez tale and Moebius pages from **The Incal** that were previously only available in Europe.

***The Metabarons: Alpha/Omega**, priced $9.95, ships in November.*

ZEN is set to make a comeback, stripped of his Intergalactic Ninja designation and with a new look [above as depicted by Bill Maus] *that creator/writer Steve Stern describes as a little more alien-looking, "The way I always envisioned him." Zen Comics is currently developing its new **Zen** series for a 2003 launch.*



Ross to depict JLA origins

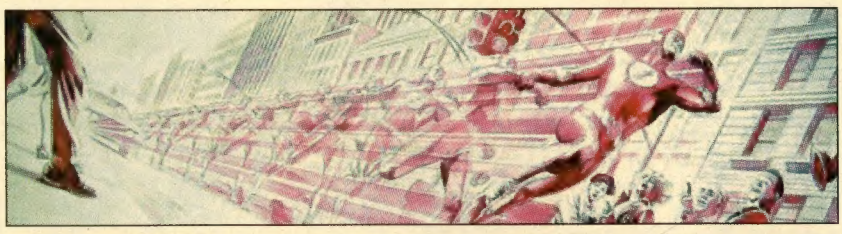
EACH year since 1998, Paul Dini and Alex Ross have produced a one-shot starring one of DC's major icons.

For this year's Christmas release, the writer and award-winning artist are turning their attention to the JLA.

Scheduled for December, **JLA: Secret Origins** contains two page spreads on a number of key JLA members who were not featured in Dini and Ross's earlier tabloids. "Included in this book," said the writer, "will be the origins of Green Arrow, Flash, Plastic Man, Aquaman and many others. The four characters from the previous books – Superman, Batman, Captain Marvel and Wonder Woman – will be included as well, along with new material delving into the history of the League and showing a number of their allies and associate members.

"We made the decision to cast **Secret Origins** with the Silver Age versions of the characters," he added. "It just felt right.

● The pair also have **JLA: Liberty and Justice** in the pipeline. Lined up for late next year, it spotlights Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, the Flash, Aquaman and Martian Manhunter, the original five members of the team.



WildStorm wins Robotech

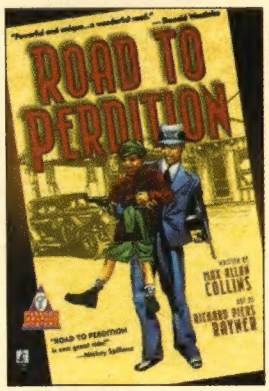
IN THE scramble to grab the rights to '80s nostalgia lines, Image managed to acquire G.I. Joe, Micronauts, *Masters of the Universe* and *Battle of the Planets* while DreamWave latched on to the top-selling Transformers.

It looked like WildStorm was going to be left with only **Thundercats** but, moving away from action figures, the DC imprint has landed the licence to *Robotech*. One of the most influential and long-running of the anime shows brought to American TV in the mid-'80s, it also has a lengthy comics history unlike *Battle of the Planets*.

WildStorm's first **Robotech** project is to be a four-issue series. Lined up to premiere in December, it is plotted by *Robotech* creative director Tommy Yune and scripted by Jay Faerber, with art by UDON's Long Vo, Charles Park and Saka.

The series is a *Macross Saga* comic, focusing on the original cast of characters.

Marvel nabs DC film tie-in



*Above: The cover to Paradox Press's **The Road to Perdition** graphic novel; art by Richard Piers Rayner.*

IN A somewhat unusual move, author Max Allan Collins is developing a Marvel series that ties in with a graphic novel he wrote for DC's Paradox Press imprint in 1998.

Following the success of director Sam Mendes' movie adaptation of his **Road to Perdition**, Collins is writing a six-parter that details what happened during the period when Michael Sullivan and his son, also named Michael, were on the road robbing the banks where the Capone mob had stashed money.

Although no artist has yet been assigned to **Tales from the Road**, its is intended that Richard Piers Rayner, who illustrated the Paradox Press graphic novel, should provide covers and draw the mini's final issue.

"In the graphic novel," said Collins explaining the basic premise of the series, "I set up a six month period – in the movie it's six weeks – where the father and son are on the road pulling all these robberies and doing all this stuff, and I wanted to do a **Lone Wolf & Cub** kind of series about the adventures they had with a thread through it so it too can be released as a graphic novel."

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WH Smith retrospective on Marvel UK's 30th

News feature by **ROB KIRBY**

FOLLOWING a run of features on the early days of Marvel, writer Paul Gravett was recently commissioned by the WH Smith **Magazine Guide** team to produce a follow-up piece to celebrate this autumn's 30th anniversary of Marvel UK.

Having previously written individual slots about Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four and The X-Men, Gravett's latest feature in the August/ September 18th issue broadens the scope to provide a whistle-stop tour of almost 30 years worth of the British weekly and monthly comics.

Marvel UK then & now

Launched in 1972, the October 7th dated debut of **The Mighty World of Marvel** marked Marvel's first foray into publishing its own comics outside of the States. Where they had traditionally licensed material to other publishers around the world, the creation of the UK wing was a radical departure.

Although only nominally based in Britain initially – as the actual production work was conducted in a rapidly expanding UK Bullpen nestling within the US one – by the end of the '70s sales were slipping with only **Star Wars Weekly** a healthy peak on the balance sheets.

Unsurprisingly, IPC – then publishers of over 20 weekly comics – was interested in taking over **Star Wars Weekly** which consistently outsold **2000 AD** at that time, but did not want any of the lesser Marvels.

Before shutting shop for good Marvel asked **Starburst** publisher Dez Skinn to prepare a report on how he thought the UK line could be saved. After several rewrites, to soften the severity of his comments, Dez's report was enthusiastically received by Stan Lee himself, who persuaded Dez to head up his own new UK-based Bullpen by offering to bring **Starburst** into Marvel's infant monthly line-up.

A year or so later Dez departed, with the construction of **Warrior** soon to follow, and left behind a revitalised outfit that was subsequently helmed by a succession of editors, including a double run by his ex-art editor Paul Neary in the 1980s and 1990s.

Ultimately, Marvel UK's fate was decided by the fall-out from the speculator boom and bust that descended on the comics industry in the mid-Nineties. With the British range now already being published out of the offices of recent acquisition Figurine Panini, when Chapter 11 bankruptcy beckoned, Marvel was forced to sell off Panini, licensing the entire UK range to them in the process. As a distributor of the rights to Marvel's properties across the world, Panini Comics is now also responsible for one of the most stable line-ups in the company's entire history.

Magazine Guide

Boasting over 400,000 readers, the free digest format **Magazine Guide** promotes not only Marvel's range and those of other UK comics publishers, but also spotlights many of the hundreds of magazines carried in the larger W.H. Smith branches and in independent newsagents.

With the addition of two extra pages of cover repros supporting Paul Gravett's article, this latest feature is the largest comics entry in the **Magazine Guide** to date.

*Part of Panini's current crop, including the only survivor of Marvel UK's 1970s titles and only originated title of the above batch, **Doctor Who Magazine**.*

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In Brief

SHREK comes to comics. With a sequel to the 2001 CGI fantasy blockbuster in development, Dark Horse is planning a 2003 launch for a series featuring characters from the animated movie in new stories that poke fun at fairy tales.

DAREDEVIL and Elektra are next to get the *Ultimate* treatment.

Writer Greg Rucka and artist Salvador Larroca are the creative team responsible for **Ultimate Daredevil/Elektra**. A four-issue series, it premieres in December.

THE ART of Comic-Book Writing is Randy (**Aliens vs Predator**) Stradley's step-by-step guide to every aspect of writing graphic fiction.

A companion to Gary Martin's **The Art of Comic-Book Inking**, this 8½x11" softcover features contributions from Kurt Busiek, Peter David, Ron Marz, John Arcudi, Dave Gibbons, Mark Waid and Steven Grant among others. Such artists as Art Adams, Paul Gulacy and Chris Warne provide the illustrations.

Priced $14.95, the black and white volume ships from Dark Horse on December 18.

JUST Imagine Stan Lee with John Cassaday Creating Crisis has been delayed. Originally scheduled for July 17, the $5.95 DC 48-pager is now set to ship on September 11.

NINJA High School hits the century mark in November.

Created, written and drawn by Ben Dunn, the man often described as the godfather of American manga, the first manga-style comic produced in the US was launched by Antarctic Press in 1986. The black and white #100 ships with four alternate covers. A 48-pager, it is priced $4.95.

Supreme: The Story of the Year is the first of two volumes collecting writer Alan Moore's run on Awesome Entertainment's Superman-esque series.

Published by Checker Books, the 332-page softcover reprints **Supreme** #41-51 plus 52A and 52B. Priced $26.95, it ships in November.

DARK Horse has finally rescheduled the last two issues of its **Joss Whedon's Fray** eight-parter.

Drawn by Karl Moline and Andy Owens, the $2.99 #7 and 8 – originally solicited for February 20 and March 20 respectively – will now ship on December 4 and 25.

LOBO creator Keith Giffen is writing **Zodiac**, a DC series he says asks about the reality that could be behind the signs of the zodiac.

"What if there were actually houses of the zodiac – this kind of sci-fantasy/mystic realm, with four elemental alliances made up of three houses each, and the alliances are at war," he asked rhetorically. "From there, it's a matter of what would happen if they brought their war to earth?"

Currently unscheduled, the non-DC Universe title is drawn by **A Distant Soil**'s Colleen Doran and Bob (**Uncanny X-Men**) Wiacek.

Dredd faces Aliens

IT IS five years since Mega-City One's Lawman of the Future encountered Predator but now he is set to go up against 20th Century Fox's other extraterrestrial movie-cum-comicbook creatures.

Beginning in the 100-page Prog 2003, the special end-of-year edition of **2000 AD**, Judge Dredd finds he has his hands full as the bio-mechanical Aliens infest his city. Written by Dredd co-creator John Wagner and ex-**2000 AD** editor Andy Diggle, **Judge Dredd/Aliens: Incubus** is illustrated by *Nemesis the Warlock*'s Henry Flint.

"I think it's weak to just use Aliens as cannon-fodder, so we're working hard to make them absolutely lethal – the ultimate killing machines," remarked Diggle. "Trust me, you put just one of them in a room full of armed Judges, and within 30 seconds there won't be many people left standing."

2000 AD Prog 2003 goes on sale on December 18.

Superheroes make comeback at Image

*Above: Jim Valentino's promo art for Image's forthcoming **Shadowhawk** relaunch.*

A DECADE after it launched as an alternative to Marvel and DC, Image Comics is to resuscitate its superhero line.

Already in the pipeline to launch in January are four titles that – together with such existing series as **Noble Causes** and **Savage Dragon** – will form part of an integrated universe. **The Clockmaker** by Jim Krueger and Matt Smith, Jay Faerber and Jamal Igle's **Venture**, Keith Giffen's **Dominion** and **Invincible** by Robert Kirkman and Cory Walker are to be joined at a later date by Jim Valentino's revival of his **Shadowhawk** series.

Frank Cho tackles Marvel's She-Devil

LIKE Brian Michael Bendis, **Liberty Meadows** creator Frank Cho has signed a semi-exclusive contract with Marvel.

In Cho's case this allows him to continue with his Image title and related projects while committing himself to two years and 12 issues with the Spider-Man publisher.

For his first assignment the writer/artist has chosen an eight-issue **Shanna the She-Devil** series. To be published bimonthly under Marvel's MAX – mature readers – imprint, the comic is described by Cho as a cross between *Jurassic Park*, *Tremors* and **Cavewoman**.

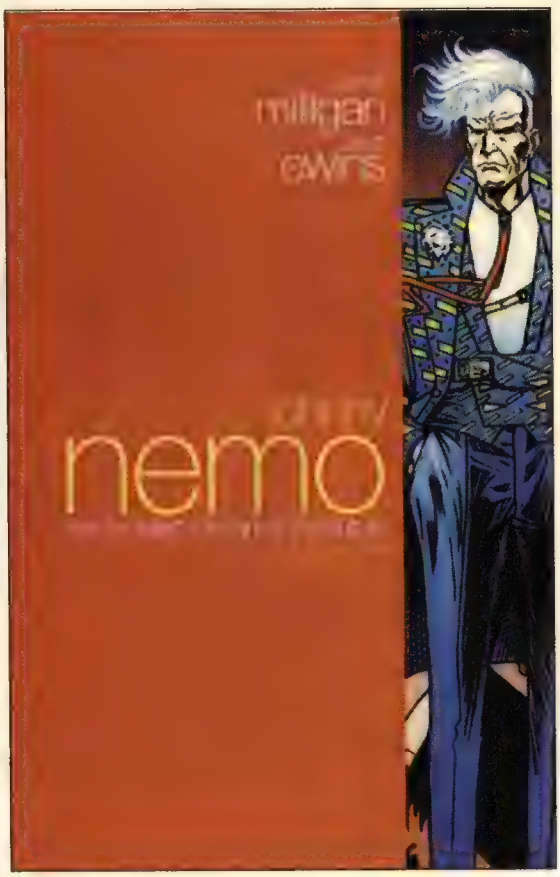
"Why Shanna? C'mon – sexy women in leather bikinis, hot jungles, vicious dinosaurs... Shanna's got my name written all over it," Cho quipped.

"Seriously," he continued, "this Shanna that I've recreated is no way like the old Shanna. No more Ka-Zar.

*Above: Frank Cho's promo art for his eight-issue **Shanna the She-Devil** series.*

No more B.S. animal rights message. No more frail second banana role. She's literally a brand new character. You guys have to read it to see what I'm talking about."

Written and drawn by Cho, **Shanna the She-Devil** is lined up to premiere early in 2003.



*AFTER losing out on a compilation of Pete Milligan and Brett Ewins' **Skreemer** to DC, Cyberosia Publishing is to collect the writer and artist's stories of their existential hitman of the future from **Deadline Magazine**. The 88-page **Johnny Nemo** trade paperback – which reprints almost a dozen of the black and white strips – also features* Time for Nemo, *the first new tale in over a decade. Priced $12.95, the softcover volume ships in November.*

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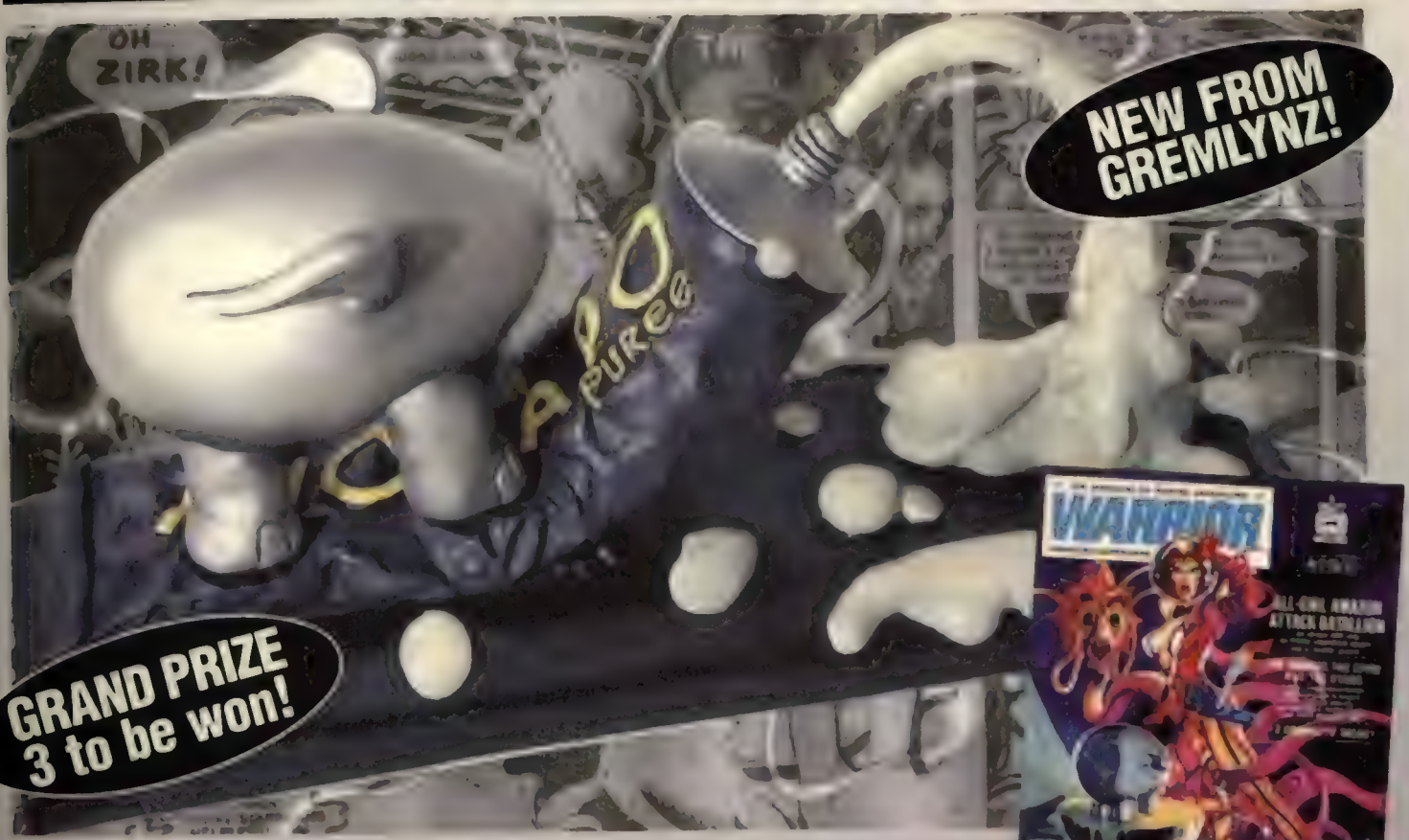

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Circle the correct answers from the following three questions:

Which of the following is not a Zirk catch phrase?
a) I like what I like... and what I like thrashes!
b) Yabba-dabba-doo!
c) Hubba-hubba-hubba!

Which of the following does not describe Zirk?
a) Pervert
b) Deviant
c) Mormon

In what Warrior strip did Zirk first appear?
a) V for Vendetta
b) Laser Eraser & Pressbutton
c) Marvelman

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Ellis broadcasts on Global Frequency for WildStorm

THE WORLD'S last line of defence is the focus of a 12-part WildStorm series from **Transmetropolitan** writer Warren Ellis.

Each **Global Frequency** issue is devoted to one of the 1,001 individuals on the eponymous worldwide telecommunications spider web that reaches from Nova Scotia to Tasmania. Unknown to the outside world they wait for the call they pray will never come, the one that gives them only 30 minutes to save the planet.

The calls are made by Aleph, central dispatcher for the Global Frequency, who gets her orders from the pseudonymous Miranda Zero, creator and operator of the organisation. A real enigma, Zero's true identity was erased from the world's records the moment she went into business.

Deranged science

Describing Global Frequency's mission, Ellis said, "It's here to clean up after the 20th century – to keep an eye on the bad, mad things in the dark that the public never found out about. All the black projects, the deranged science, the chilly encounters with the unknown, the Cold War traps – they're all sitting there like landmines. Eventually someone will trip over one of them. The Global Frequency is there to catch them when they fall, and defuse the mines before they explode into mainstream consciousness, causing more pain and horror than they have already."

As each issue of **Global Frequency** stars a different agent, so it is illustrated by a different artist – one whose style is suited to that particular storyline.

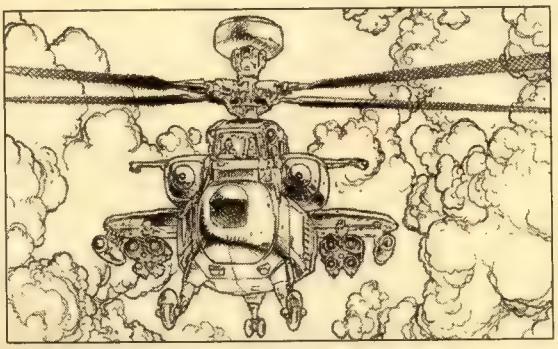
The series premieres with a story drawn by **Marvelman**'s Garry Leach. Others lined up to contribute are Steve Dillon, Gene Ha, Glenn Fabry and David Lloyd.

Vanishing shuttle

Also in the pipeline from Ellis is **Orbiter**, a 96-page graphic novel for Vertigo.

Drawn by Colleen Doran and scheduled to be released in hardcover before Christmas, it tells how the space shuttle Venture returns to Earth with only one of its seven crew 10 years after it vanished.

***Global Frequency** #1, priced $2.95, ships on October 23.*



*Above: Glenn Fabry art from **Global Frequency** #2. Top: Gary Leach's depiction of Miranda Zero from issue #1 of the WildStorm 12-parter written by **The Authority** co-creator Warren Ellis.*

*SHOWN above is art from **Freemind** #0, the first title from Future Comics, the company set up by industry veterans Bob Layton, Dick Giordano and David Michelinie. Drawn by Giordano and Layton who co-plotted it with writer Michelinie, the $2.25 one-shot features the title character as he appears after his origin is revealed across the first three issues of his ongoing series. Available now, the standalone special is being distributed to retailers by Future. For further details log on to www.futurecomicsonline.com.*

Ex-Marvel Knights editor delves into paranormal

HAVING returned to the life of a freelance writer, former Marvel Knights editor Stuart Moore is developing a second title for Penny-Farthing Press.

He is planning to follow his two **Zendra** six-parters with **Para**, a series Moore says combines the supernatural with nuclear psychics.

The story is based around a real supercollider that has been radioactive for 20 years. Located in the American desert and only now inert, its first visitors in two decades discover 'Para' written on its walls. The mystery of the mini is who wrote it and what does it mean?

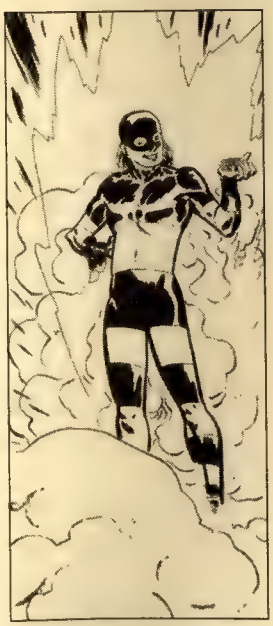
No artist has yet been assigned to **Para** which is scheduled for a 2003 launch.

DC dials H again

THE WRITER of Vertigo's **Finals** is reviving one of the more unsophisticated of DC's Silver Age series.

Will Pfeifer's version of *Dial H for H-E-R-O*, which debuted in **House of Mystery** #156 [1966], is unlike either of the two previous incarnations. Rather than featuring one individual as the owner of the magical dial that transforms them into different superheroes each time they use it, the writer is to have the device – no longer a dial – move from person to person. This will allow him to demonstrate how varying situations, personalities and moral compasses affect the way each uses – or abuses – the superpowers they are granted.

"The guy with the device in the first four issues is Jerry Feldon, a downtrodden soda jerk living in a dying industrial town," explained Pfeifer. "Though you'd think having superpowers would solve all Jerry's problems, that's not the case. In fact, the entire series starts with Jerry dashing into a phone booth. Trouble is, he's not changing into a superhero. He's calling a crisis hot-line before he tries to end his life."



*Above: Kano artwork from DC's **Dial H for H-E-R-O** relaunch.*

Intended to be an ongoing series, **Dial H for H-E-R-O** is tentatively set for a March launch. It is being drawn by Kano, a newcomer.

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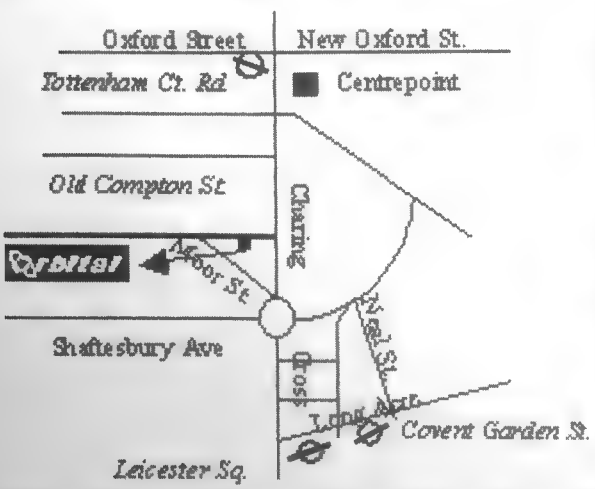


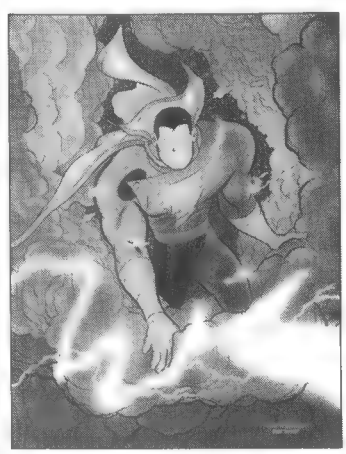
*GREEN Arrow's Kevin Smith is writing **Target**, a **Daredevil/Bullseye** miniseries for Marvel. To be released in 2003 as a tie-in with the Ben Affleck-starring* Daredevil *movie, the story is* not *a direct sequel to the writer's* Guardian Devil *serial from **Daredevil** #1-8. "If DD's anything to Bullseye, he's an obstruction to whatever hit he's currently working on; a distraction from the job he's being paid to do – unless the job he's being paid for is to fuck with DD, as in* Guardian Devil. *But we're going to alter the dynamic of their relationship by the mini's end, so that DD means much more to Bullseye," said Smith. **Daredevil/Bullseye: Target** is drawn by **Preacher** cover artist Glenn Fabry whose art for the recent* **Daredevil** *poster is shown above.*

Bone creator moves on to first Captain Marvel

AFTER he concludes his self-published **Bone** in 2003 with #55, cartoonist Jeff Smith is taking on a work-for-hire commission for DC.

The Cartoon Books head is to write and draw a four-issue, prestige format series featuring the original [Fawcett] Captain Marvel.

"I went back and I read a lot of the Golden Age **Captain Marvel**, specifically, *The Monster Society of Evil* storyline from the '40s, and that really inspired me – so much so for me to name my series **Shazam!: Monster Society of Evil**," Smith explained. "It won't be the exact same story at all – but my approach is really to do a classic, and timeless story.



*Above: Jeff Smith's promo art for DC's **Shazam!: Monster Society of Evil**.*

"So, we will see Dr Sivana and Mr. Mind – all the main characters," the writer/artist continued. "What appeals to me is the simplicity and the purity of these individuals, so really working things out in too much detail isn't that important with Captain Marvel – he's a little kid who turns into a superhero.

"I'm not going to worry about making everything completely believable," he added, "but there are some things that have always bothered me... Shazam is supposed to have ties to ancient Egypt, but Shazam is an acronym of Greek gods. There are a few things like that I'll try to straighten out, so it makes sense with today's readers."

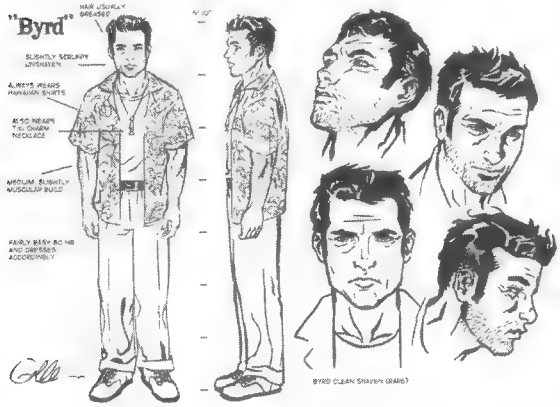
Shazam!: Monster Society of Evil is tentatively set to premiere late next year.

"Rockford Files in Hawaii" for Image

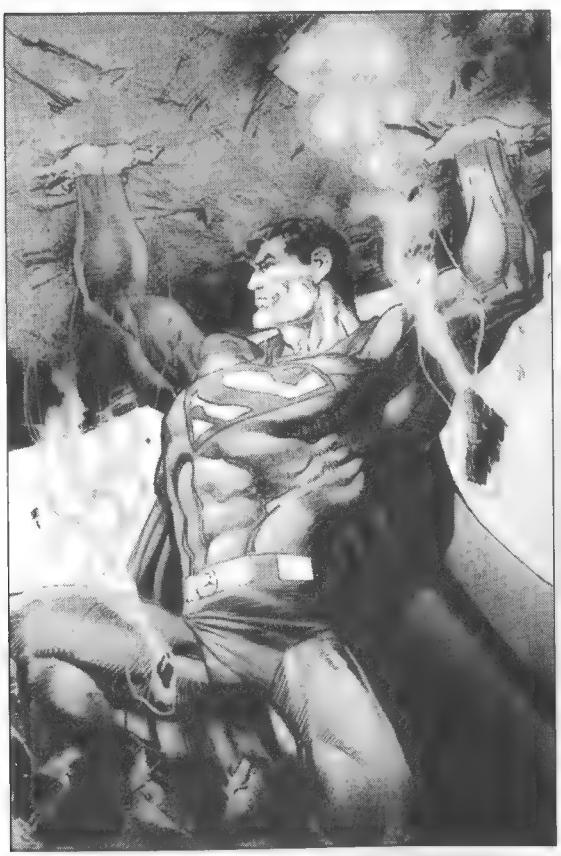
THE CO-EDITOR of Slave Labor Graphics' **Love in Tights** anthology has written a three-issue crime series he says is set in the dangerous and exotic world of crime-drenched 1950s Hawaii.

Illustrated by newcomer, Steve Griffen, **Hawaiian Dick: Byrd of Paradise** is described by its creator/writer, B Clay Moore as *The Rockford Files* in Hawaii. "If you're familiar with that James Garner TV series, you know that the lead character, Jim Rockford, was a private detective who, more often than not, stumbled in and out of trouble, generally getting his ass kicked along the way. Our lead character, Byrd, is that kind of guy."

An Image title, **Hawaiian Dick: Byrd of Paradise** premieres in December.



Above: Character studies of Byrd, the star of Image's three-issue ***Hawaiian Dick: Bird of Paradise****; art by Steve Griffen.*



TO ACKNOWLEDGE the 10th anniversary of Superman's death, the ***Daily Planet*** *assigns a new reporter to do a feature on the tragedy. At least that is the ostensible reason for DC's four-issue* ***Superman: Day of Doom****. Premiering on November 13, the $2.95 weekly series is written by Dan Jurgens, the writer/artist who masterminded* The Death of Superman *storyline, and drawn by him and Bill Sienkiewicz* [see first issue cover art, above].

Authority next for 2000 AD creators

CURRENTLY negotiating with various creative teams for the resurrection of **The Authority** title as an ongoing series, WildStorm is keeping the controversial title in the public eye with yet another *Eye of the Storm* one-shot.

Following **Kev** and the team's appearance in **Storm-Watch: Team Achilles** #4-6, the DC imprint has the $4.95 **Authority: Scorched Earth** lined up for a December release. Written by Robbie (*Nikolai Dante*) Morrison and drawn by *Necronauts*' Frazer Irving, the 48-page special sees the Midnighter, Apollo and the rest of the team take on a new being. It threatens the very existence of the human race, but its death could destroy the entire solar system.

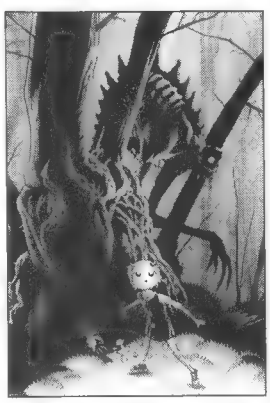
"A heretofore unknown entity has been discovered on the Sun and has caused it to be on the brink of reaching supernova 5 billion years early," explained the series' new editor Ben Abernathy.

Oni's grump is back

GLOOMCOOKIE'S Ted Naifeh is reviving Courtney Crumrin for a second Oni Press four-parter.

Simultaneously with the release of a 120-page trade paperback collection of his earlier **Night Things**, the writer/artist is pitting his grumpy young gal against hobgoblins, evil mages, and a council of the town's most powerful witches and warlocks in **Coven of Mystics**. Both titles are published in black and white.

Courtney Crumrin & The Night Things *trade paperback, priced $11.95, and* ***Courtney Crumrin & The Coven of Mystics*** *#1, priced $2.95, both ship on December 26.*



Above: Ted Naifeh's cover art for the first issue of Oni Press's ***Courtney Crumrin & The Coven of Mystics*** *four-parter.*

In Brief

J SCOTT Campbell's Danger Girl is set to return early next year in a 48-page WildStorm/Cliffhanger one-shot.

Written by Campbell and Andy Hartnell, **Danger Girl: Hawaiian Punch** is drawn by Phil (**Beautiful Killer**) Noto.

ONI is to release a collected edition of Brian Wood's **Pounded** three-parter as an 88-page digest-sized trade paperback. Illustrated by Steve Rolston, the black and white compilation ships on October 23, priced $8.95.

THE FINAL chapter in the Brian Azzarello-written **Batman/Deathblow after the Fire** three-parter has been delayed even further. Already pushed back from June 26 to July 31 and from there to September 4 and then to October 16, the $5.95 48-pager – drawn by Lee Bermejo and Tim Bradstreet – has now been rescheduled for October 30.

THE CHRISTMAS issue of **Judge Dredd Megazine** is to be a 150-page special.

TRINA Robbins and Anne Timmons' series about a teenager who is a second generation superheroine is being repackaged by Dark Horse.

Shipping on October 16, the black and white **Go Girl!** trade paperback is priced $15.95. A 136-pager, it features material not included in the Image comic.

30 DAYS of Night's Steve Niles has struck a deal with Avatar Press to write **The Dreads**, which he describes as an over-the-top sword and sorcery series.

Speaking of the currently unscheduled project Niles commented, "Fans of **Spawn: The Dark Ages** will love this one. It's going to get very nasty".

DARK Horse has acquired yet another movie licence.

Early in 2003 the **Star Wars** publisher is to launch both a prequel and a sequel to *xXx*, the film starring Vin Diesel as a notorious underground thrill seeker who had been considered untouchable by the law. Dark Horse also plans to feature other characters from the movie in separate **xXx** projects.

BEN RAAB and artist Pat Quinn are developing a graphic novel sequel to their Image one-shot, **Cryptopia** for a yet-to-be determined publisher.

FOLLOWING hold ups with issues #16 and 17, Howard Chaykin and David Tischman's **American Century** #18 has been delayed until September 18. Originally solicited to ship on August 21, the $2.50 Vertigo comic is illustrated by Marc Laming and John Stokes.

#19 now ships on October 16, pushed back from September 18.

THE NEXT Marvel project for the writer/artist team of Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale is to be **Hulk: Gray**.

A look at the Hulk's early days a la their **Spider-Man: Blue** and **Daredevil: Yellow**, the mini is to debut next year, just prior to the premiere of the Ang Lee-directed *Incredible Hulk* movie.

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Dave McKean's mixed media

Novel Graphics by Paul Gravett

Highlighting the latest and best in graphic novels

OVER a dinner at a French Comics Festival, Hunt Emerson drew a caricature of fellow Brit Dave McKean wildly nailing down a kitchen sink onto his artwork. It's funny, but revealing too, because plenty of pen-and-ink cartoonists were wary, even disdainful, then of the fancy, 'fine artsy' experiments McKean was making. But he wasn't posing: 'Comics have developed, or should I say continued monotonously, in a bubble. Form rarely strays from the traditional pencil/inked cartoons that have serviced them for many years'. He set out to change them.

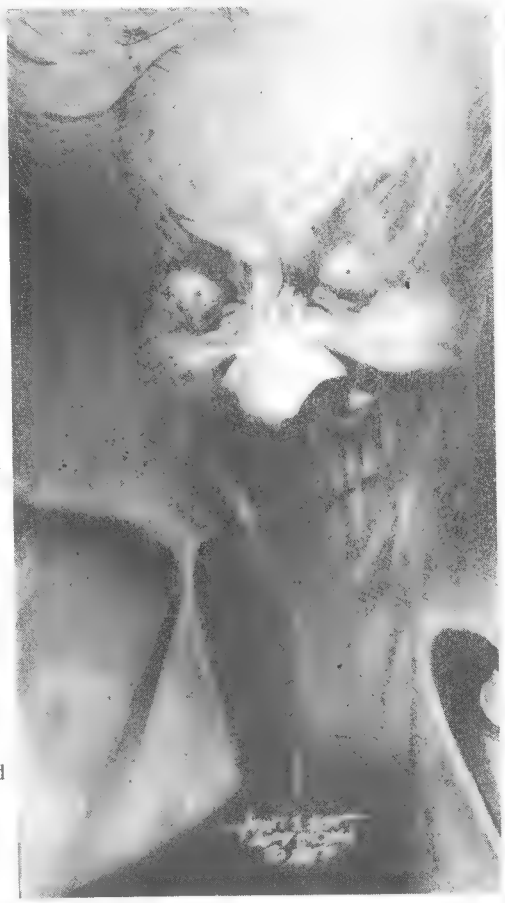
In 1987, when McKean drew his debut Escape graphic novel **Violent Cases** written by Neil Gaiman, his techniques were pretty radical, at least in Eighties English-language comics: collaging maps, texts, fabric and movie posters to convey the unreliable, distorting lens of memory; choosing different media for different effects, even in the same panel; reconfiguring panels, balloons and captions into fresh relations.

I recall the buzz in Titan Books' basement when he brought in the moody cover art montaged with faded photos, a torn dollar bill and playing card, and real ivy leaves. Comics weren't supposed to look like this.

Gaiman's measured, multi-levelled narration, in which he merges recollections of a semi-autobiographical 'Sixties childhood with those of a gangster massacre in 'Twenties Chicago, was tailor-made for McKean's visual imaginings.

When applied, however, to post-**Watchmen** superheroics on **Black Orchid** and **Batman: Arkham Asylum**, McKean's first comic art in colour far outclassed their overblown genre trappings. Still, the Bat-book earned him his dues and a wider following among fans and pro imitators. Luckily he could turn his back on superheroes forever with the rise of Vertigo Comics. He distinguished and defined DC's 'mature readers' imprint on the racks by using painting, photography, 'found' objects and typography on his arresting Hellblazer and Sandman covers.

For style bible **The Face** magazine, McKean and Gaiman were commissioned to serialise a graphic novel and then expanded it into a book for Gollancz in 1992. In **Signal to Noise**, an elderly film-director with terminal cancer can't stop planning his last film in his head, set at the end of the first millennium, when the world is expected to end. This is his way of trying to make sense of the end of his world, to detect a signal amid all of life's noise. Not the light, easy read **The Face** may have wanted. The story partly reflects McKean's passion to make a movie, but more significantly taps into his father's death when he was 14. Look beyond its demanding formalisms and its content is



*Above: McKean's masterwork, **Cages**, his most ambitious project to date, both in subject and scale. Facing page: The Joker from **Arkham Asylum**, written by Grant Morrison. McKean's depiction of The Clown Prince of Crime was one of the most disturbing ever seen in comics.*

touchingly bittersweet.

Gaiman and McKean's next Gollancz collaboration, **Mr Punch**, an unofficial sequel to **Violent Cases**, revisits their semi-autobiographical childhood. From a boy's perspective, adults loom as 'threatening creatures', seething with the sort of violence against the family that Mr Punch gets away with. McKean deliberately confounds readers' expectations, by enacting some of the disturbingly 'real' everyday scenes with puppet-like figures and sets, in contrast to the 'unreal' dreaming and remembering recorded in photographs.

McKean continues his partnership with Gaiman on acclaimed children's books, but he writes his own comics too. Almost in an act of self purification, he strips away **Mr Punch**'s overelaborate techniques in his 500-page **Cages**, reissued by NBM/Titan. He rediscovers the power of making marks on paper, and in its best passages the power of comics to record life's fleeting details and get inside the minds of his characters. McKean creates a personal creation myth to free his cast from their cages.

He pursues **Cages**' direct, strong drawing in two silent fables in **Pictures That Tick**, his new short story collection from Allen Spiegel Fine Arts. His tense penwork in *Bitten & Bruised* transmits a husband's growing paranoia of what his wife might be hiding beneath the sheets. One dangerous image can spark a story: a head pierced by a shard of glass urges McKean to re-examine his father and *His Story*, now that he is a father himself; a branch growing through a girl unleashes the dark cautionary study *Ash*. McKean is still pushing, though 'the comix industry seems pathologically afraid of change'. Make some effort and these 18 tales suggest blueprints for the shapes of comics to come.

With hindsight, so much of what McKean started introducing in the late Eighties, such as overlapping images on acetate or playing with the distortions of video and photocopiers, can be seen now as hands-on precursors to the image manipulation software common in comics today. McKean is due to discuss the computer's impact on comics at London's Institute of Contemporary Art (www.ica.org.uk) on Thursday September 26th, with Dave Gibbons and **2000 AD**'s Matt Smith.

The latest I heard, McKean is to direct his dream film. But he'll return to comics, I'm sure. As his painter in **Cages** says, 'the possibilities are infinite.'

Next: France's Nouvelle Vague: Trondheim & David B.

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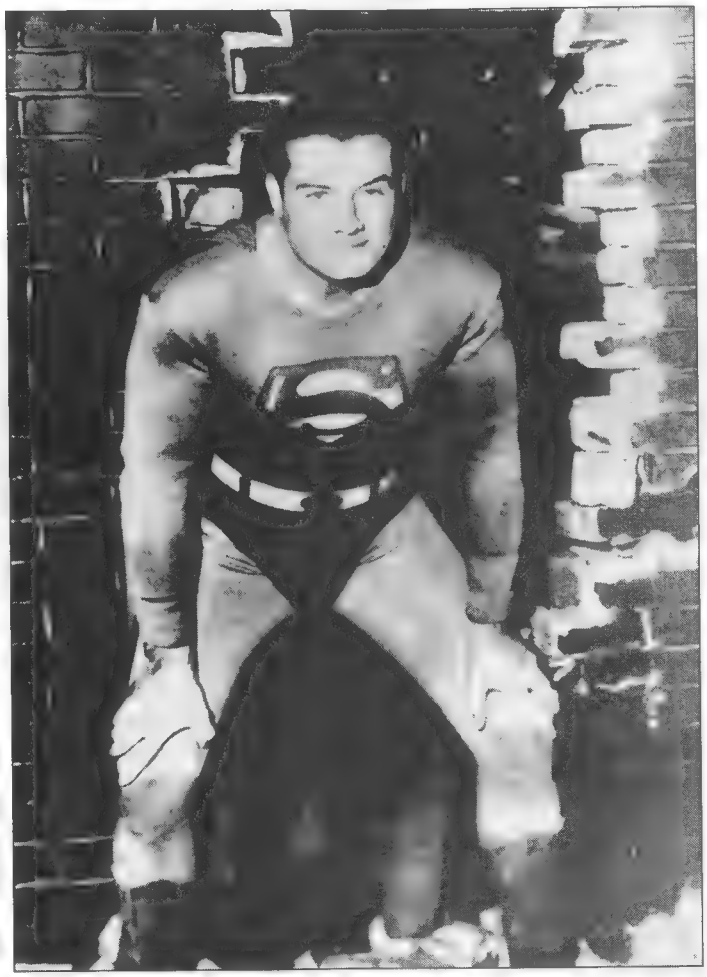
Was it suicide or murder? Miramax delves into final fate of TV's Superman

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Charting the latest news between films and comics



THE DEATH of the actor who played Superman on the US TV series from 1953 to 1957 has been surrounded by controversy for over 40 years. After George Reeves was found with a bullet through his skull at his home in Hollywood's Laurel Canyon on June 16, 1959, the coroner called his death "indicated suicide" even though the first detective on the scene had commented, "That certainly is an odd upward trajectory for a bullet to take – if this is a suicide."

Another Los Angeles detective who worked on the case recently told a journalist, "Frankly, the evidence seemed to support that Reeves was murdered." It's a theory many of Reeves' friends and associates have subscribed to since his tragic death.

Now the mystery is set to leap into the public eye via *Truth, Justice and the American Way*. The biopic written by Paul Bernbaum – who will also serve as the movie's executive producer – focuses on the *Superman* actor's untimely demise.

The script – from the creator of the Leonard Nimoy-produced *Deadly Games* TV series – details both the botched investigation into Reeves' mysterious death in Hollywood as well as, through flashbacks, the actor's complex relationship with the iconic role that shot him to fame.

The movie is being produced and directed by Michael and Mark Polish, siblings whose credits include the indie films *Jackpot* and *Twin Falls, Idaho*. It has been picked up by Miramax but was originally with USA Films whose chairman, Scott Greenstein said, "Michael and Mark Polish are two of the most innovative young independent filmmakers on the scene today. George Reeves' life and death in Hollywood is explored in a manner that we think will fascinate and illuminate."

USA Films' president of production Glenn Williamson added: "There are a number of roles any actor would love to play. The story resonates not only as George Reeves' story but also as the story of the detective on the case, and as a portrait of a moment in time where a whole generation lost its innocence."

Truth, Justice and the American Way started out as a script written on spec by Bernbaum who said it was a story he'd wanted to do forever, but didn't know how to tell. "I knew that a straight biopic had no chance of getting made. When I finally figured out a way to do it, I started writing."

Referring to the film's content, he announced, "Somebody's bound to be pissed off. This is not a strict retelling of history. This is not an *A&E Biography* or a *Mysteries & Scandals*. This is a movie. There are fictional characters. There are fictional scenes. Some of the dates and events are inaccurate. But I've tried to stay true to Reeves' character while exploring the different theories of what happened on June 16, 1959."

Shooting is currently planned to begin in October. It should renew interest not only in the case but also in the TV series. I wonder how long it'll be before one of the satellite channels resurrects the Reeves' *Superman*?

Superman elbows Batman aside

Sticking with DC's Man of Steel, it looks like a solo *Superman* film is moving ahead again.

Apparently *Armageddon*'s J J Abrams has turned in a *Superman: The Man of Steel* screenplay that's so good – even though at 200 pages long it would run to two-and-a-half to three hours – that Warner Bros has decided to push ahead with it in preference to director Wolfgang Petersen's *Batman vs Superman* – greenlighted just over a month ago. The fact that Petersen wants to shoot *Troy*, his epic adaptation of Homer's *Iliad*, before getting involved with the comicbook hero just made the decision easier.

But in the on-again, off-again world of Hollywood, there are still problems ahead for the Abrams-

SEPARATED at birth? Above (left) is TV Superman George Reeves while on the right is Kyle Maclachlan. The front runner to portray the TV Superman in Truth, Justice and the American Way, *the* Twin Peaks *and* Dune *star recently shot a four-scene audition tape from which the photo is taken.*

scripted flick. Not only does it still not have a budget but, McG – the currently attached director – may be too busy with his *Charlie's Angels* sequel to relaunch the *Superman* franchise. While *The Mummy*'s Brendan Fraser is still favourite for the title role, *Rush Hour*'s Brett Ratner is front runner to take over from McG.

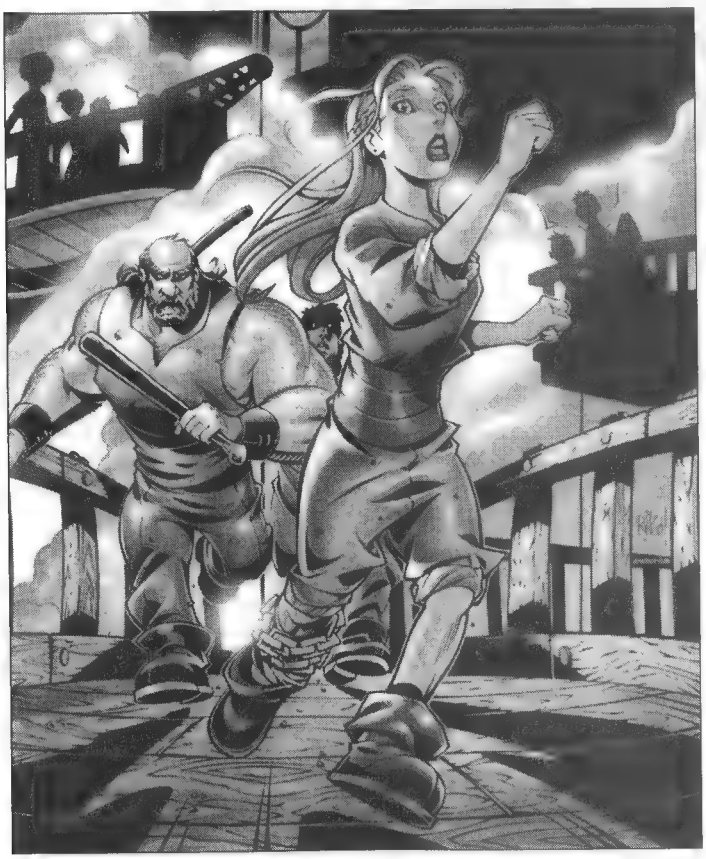
No Honor for Showtime

Top Cow has a second property heading for the small screen.

Following its successful *Witchblade* series, Marc Silvestri's publishing studio is in negotiations with Showtime to develop a TV pilot based on writer Fiona Avery's **No Honor** with Gale Anne Hurd's Valhalla Motion Pictures producing.

Mortal Kombat: Annihilation's Brent Friedman is attached to develop the script in collaboration with Avery, who wrote two episodes of *Crusade*, J Michael Straczynski's *Babylon 5* spin-off.

The comic tells the story of a jewel thief who steals an ancient katana and inadvertently releases the spirit of a Samurai warrior and is forced to share his existence with him.



IN THE wake of lining up movie/TV deals for ***Sigil***, ***Saurians*** *and* ***Mystic***, *Michael Uslan has now set up a fourth CrossGen property. The Branded Entertainment head has landed* ***Meridian*** [art above] *at Cornerstone Animation. The plan is to make an animated feature of the coming-of-age adventure about the youthful leader of a mythical island struggling against her evil uncle for control of her powers. Uslan has also set up a live-action movie based on* ***The Way of the Rat***, *CrossGen's martial arts action/adventure series.* The Scorpion King*'s Chuck Russell is set to write and direct through partner Frank Darabont's Dark Woods Productions for Castle Rock Entertainment.*

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READERS: You can use this Advance Listings *section as an order form with your direct market store or mail order supplier. Simply mark the items you require, copy or remove these pages (or list them on a separate piece of paper) and give it to your supplier, together with a note of your name, address and phone number to guarantee not missing any of the new titles being published. Certain suppliers may not accept standing orders, so check with them first. All prices of US titles listed are in dollars. Import prices are usually converted at a rate of $1.00 = 85p UK sterling. Shipping dates given are the earliest date product will reach stores. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate as provided by publishers.*

Compiled by Jim Hannah

The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

ON SALE FROM
OCT 2

Dark Horse

one-shot **Flood!** (Eric Drooker; *Maverick;* graphic novel) *See Close-Up, below.*

Oh My Goddess! 91 *(Traveller* 1 of 5; Kosuke Fujishima) It looks like Belldandy's powers are having a little trouble. She can't even make a penny levitate! What's going on? And to make matters worse, members of Keiichi's motorcycle club come for a visit with a bunch of possessions for Keiichi to store, and now the crew is a bit short on space. But not to fear, it's Skuld to the rescue! $2.99

one-shot **Oh My Goddess! Final Exam** (Kosuke Fujishima; tpbk) This final remastered volume restores the lost Oh My Goddess! stories, presenting the early storylines of student Keiichi Morisato's life with Belldandy, a full-on goddess. 152pg b&w $13.95

Star Wars: Empire #2 (Scott Alli & Ryan Benjamin + Curtis Arnold) The plot against the Emperor and Darth Vader proceeds, but as the conspirators worry about whether their targets suspect, they also begin to wonder about each other. Plots and counterplots prevail. .. $2.99

DC Comics

21 Down #2 (Jimmy Palmiotti + Justin Gray & Jesus Saiz + Palmiotti; *WildStorm)* Recruited by FBI Agent Mickey Rinaldi, Preston Kills reluctantly begins his quest to discover the origin of his powers and uncover the secret of the mysterious entity called Herod. $2.95

Big Daddy Danger 3 (Adam Pollina & Pollina + Tyson McAdoo) Think Big Daddy Danger's relationship with his son couldn't get any worse? Well, is it a bad sign that Little Danny Danger's in Big Daddy's opponent's corner for the big wrestling match? $2.95

final issue **The Crusades** 20 (Steven T. Seagle & Kelley Jones + Ron Randall; *Vertigo)* A coronation has occurred and a new Knight has been named. He brings with him the might of fellow brothers in arms... a new Round Table. $2.95

Detective Comics 775 (Greg Rucka + John Francis Moore & various) Batman turns up the heat on Checkmate in an effort to squeeze them for information on the fate of Sasha Bordeaux. But when an unexpected agent shows up in Gotham City, will Bruce's life ever be the same? $3.50

Doom Patrol 13 (John Arcudi & Seth Fisher) Robotman finds a tie-pin in a strange antique box – a pin that once belonged to Dr Niles Caulder, the chief of the original Doom Patrol. And once Robotman makes the connection, he and the entire modern-day team are transformed – into the original team? $2.50

Hawkman 8 (Geoff Johns & Rags Morales + Michael Bair) It's time for some *Small Talk,* as Hawkman's old friend from the JLA stops by to visit the Winged Wonder. $2.50

Justice League Adventures 12 (Chris Sequeira & Min S. Ku + Mark Propst) Mr Freeze, Captain Cold, Killer Frost and a chilling cabal of icy supervillains attempt a hostile takeover of a small African nation. $2.25

Lab Rats 7 (John Byrne) Rocketed into the depths of space, the Rats find a world utterly devoid of life. But there's something on that planet that's stalking our intrepid explorers, something they find strangely familiar. $2.50

Looney Tunes 95 (various) Monsters and madmen move in next door to Tweety and Sylvester, Daffy Duck pitches gadgets to Coyote, plus two sporting football tales starring Bugs and Pepe le Pew. $2.25

Resident Evil: Code Veronica Book 3 (Lee Chung Hing; *WildStorm;* tpbk) Chris arrives on Umbrella's zombie-infested island to rescue his sister, Claire. 144pg $14.95

The Spectre 22 (J.M. DeMatteis & Norm Breyfogle + Dennis Janke) Hal Jordan finds himself blissfully married to Carol Ferris in a parallel world where he was never Green Lantern or the Spectre. $2.75

one-shot **Star Trek: The Next Generation – Forgiveness** (David Brin & Scott Hampton; *WildStorm)* Best-selling science-fiction author David Brin tackles his first-ever Star Trek project, and first-ever graphic novel, collaborating with acclaimed painter Scott Hampton. Captain Picard and the crew of the Enterprise spot a stray transporter beam in deep space carrying a living being inside. 96pg $17.95

Superman 187 *(Ending Battle* 5 of 8; Geoff Johns & Pascual Ferry + Mark Farmer) Superman returns to a Metropolis turned into a prison by the new Master Jailer. But that's not all – guarding the gates of that prison are deadlier versions of the Prankster, Bizarro, Metallo, and an all-new, female Puzzler. $2.25

Vertigo Pop: Tokyo! 4 (Jonathan Vankin & Seth Fisher; *Vertigo)* Maki plots her final coup against pop star Hike. If she can't win his heart, she has something more dramatic in mind. $2.95

Young Justice 50 *(Fighting MAAD!* 4 of 4; Peter David & Todd Nauck + Lary Stucker) Young Justice, along with an assembled cadre of other teen heroes, invade the island of Zandia, home of Agua Sinn Gaaz, the man who killed Empress's father. 48pg $3.95

Marvel

Alias 15 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Gaydos; *MAX Comics)* MAX's superpowered P.I. has another meeting with the man called Cage. $2.99

B-Sides 2 (Brian David-Marshall & Brett Weldele) The Fantastic Four guest-star as the new superteam emerges. $2.99

Elektra 15 (Greg Rucka & Carlo Pagulayan + Danny Miki) $2.99

Exiles 18 (Judd Winick & Mike McKone + Jon Holdredge) A new story begins as Morph's past comes back to haunt him – and it could mean the end of the Exiles as we know them. $2.25

Spider-Girl 52 (Tom DeFalco & Ron Frenz + Al Williamson) $2.25

new **Spider-Man: Legend of the Spider Clan** 1 (Kaare Andrews & Skott Young) $2.25

Thor 56 (Dan Jurgens & Tom Raney + Scott Hanna) Norse God de-ices, perhaps? $2.25

Ultimate Spider-Man 27-28 (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley + Art Thibert) $2.25

Uncanny X-Men 414 (Chuck Austen & Sean Phillips) X-Men without cans. $2.25

Wolverine: Netsuke 2 (George Pratt) Wolverine goes samurai in this fully painted story by Pratt. $2.25

X-Men Icons: Chamber 3 (Brian K. Vaughan & Lee Ferguson + Norm Rapmund) $2.99

ON SALE WEEK ENDING
OCT 9

Dark Horse

American Splendor: Unsung Hero 3 (Harvey Pekar & David Collier) With just a few weeks left in his tour of duty, 19-year old McNeill's only thoughts are of escaping Vietnam's violently surrealistic landscape and returning home to the United States. But to do so, he must stay one step ahead of the enemies who try to take his life, the depression and nihilism that permeate his camp, and the commanding officers who use every loophole they can find to keep him in the bush. 24pg, b&w $3.99

one-shot **Billi 99** (Sarah Byam; *Maverick)* World War III hit, and nobody noticed. Billi, daughter of an honest industrialist, finds herself in a whirlpool of murder and corporate espionage, on the run from those who are supposed to be her allies. 200pg b&w $14.95

one-shot **Dead To Rights** (various) The most dangerous man in Grant City used to carry a badge, and Dead to Rights tells his story. He's an undercover cop buried so deep in his mission, he's starting to question the direction of his loyalties. 64pg $5.95

Grendel: Red, White, & Black 2 (Matt Wagner & various) There is only one thing that Hunter Rose – the man behind the assassin's mask of Grendel – holds more precious than his own life, and that is his adopted daughter Stacy Palumbo. But Hunter soon finds himself at odds with Stacy over her new friend, a wolf named Argent, who also happens to be Grendel's most deadly nemesis! b&w&red 48pg $4.99

one-shot **Shadow Star: Shadows of the Past** (Mohiro Kitoh) Shiina Tamai is a teenager, struggling with school and self-esteem. But her daily travails become of secondary importance when she encounters and bonds with an extra-terrestrial shape-shifting creature. 144pg b&w $19.96

Star Wars: Infinities – The Empire Strikes Back 4 (of 4; various) Dagobah is also home to the greatest living Jedi Master, Yoda. It's here that he has trained young Leia Skywalker to take her rightful place in the Jedi Order. Though she has quickly learned what he's taught her, she is not a Jedi yet. She has two important final tasks to complete. Yoda, too, has a final mission. $2.99

DC Comics

100% #5 (Paul Pope; *Vertigo)* The final chapter of 100% brings the three separate, yet interconnected, stories of three young couples abruptly together. Heavyweight fighter Haitous comes face to face with his dangerous rival, the newcomer Wallman, and Strel discovers what's inside Haitous's safety deposit box. 48pg b&w $5.95

Adventures of Superman 609 *(Ending Battle* 6 of 8; Joe Casey & Derec Aucoin) On the trail of the man responsible for the attacks on his friends and family, Superman is attacked by an armada of all-new villains. Can the Man of Steel stand up to the sheer number of adversaries against him? $2.25

Azrael: Agent of the Bat 95 (Dennis O'Neil & Sergio Cariello) Azrael's madness leads him into battle with one of his oldest foes! The Demon Biis has returned. Will Jean Paul defeat him or turn him into the newest disciple of St. Dumas? $2.95

Batgirl 33 (Kelley Puckett & Damion Scott + Robert Campanella) Batman enlists Batgirl to help him apprehend a dangerous new metahuman. But the metahuman is merely the first step in a wider investigation to find a mysterious figure named Alpha. $2.50

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 160 *(Loyalties* 2 of 3; John Ostrander & David Lopez and Dan Green) James Gordon has been kidnapped and brought back to his hometown of Chicago to be tortured into revealing the name of the last surviving eyewitness to a grisly murder. The witness: his niece, Barbara! $2.50

close-up

Flood!

Dark Horse/Maverick

Writer/Artist: Eric Drooker

A modern novel written in pictures, by the socially and politically driven Drooker. This title gives a noirish spin on all the joy and sadness that intermingles in modern day cities. This edition features a new introduction by historian and poet Luc Sante, plus a new cover and design overhaul. On its first outing, this title won the American Book Award, and is soon to be followed up by a new Drooker novel. 160pg b&w&blue $14.95

ON SALE OCTOBER 2

one-shot **Danger Girl: The Ultimate Collection** (J. Scott Campbell + Andy Hartnell & various; *WildStorm;* tpbk) All seven issues of the first volume of Danger Girl are collected. Features the rare introductory short story from the New Horizons Voyager Pack. $19.95

Fables 6 *(Animal Farm* 1 of 5; Bill Willingham & Mark Buckingham + Steve Leialoha; *Vertigo)* The mystery of her sister's murder has been solved, and the guilty parties have been punished. This leaves Fabletown's Deputy Mayor Snow White physically exhausted, spiritually drained, and in need of a rest. So she decides to personally drive one errant Colin Piggy back up to the Farm, the remote, upstate annex where the non-human Fables reside. $2.50

Gen^{13} #2 (Chris Claremont & Alé Garza + Sandra Hope; *WildStorm)* Herod strikes once more – and Gwen Matsura is marked for life. Desperate to understand what has happened to her and to learn how to control a power that seems to have a life of its own, Gwen finds herself drawn to Ethan York, another of Herod's chosen ones. $2.95

Green Lantern 155 (Judd Winick & Dale Eaglesham + Rodney Ramos) Green Lantern pleads with the Flash and the JLA to help him go back in time and avert his personal tragedy – which leads his peers to confront him about the ethics of heroism, and the line of violence that Kyle may have crossed. $2.25

Harley Quinn 25 (Karl Kesel & Craig Rousseau + Dan Davis) The Joker returns with something less than romance in his heart. Harley may have renounced him, but did she really mean it? $2.50

Hunter: The Age of Magic 16 (Dylan Horrocks & Richard Case + Steve Bird; *Vertigo)* For years Arawn Kruder has wandered the world, hanging around in war zones and disaster areas, studying magic, consuming souls and committing mass murder at every opportunity – all in the hope of gaining a brief glimpse of the woman he loves. But now he has gained a secret weapon in his struggle to win her heart: the True Name of death. $2.75

Nightwing 74 *(Something About Mary* 4 of 4; Devin Grayson & Rick Leonardi + Jesse Delperdang) Mary's flight takes her to London, where she faces the most dangerous villains of her long journey: Lady Vic and Brutale! $2.25

JLA 73 *(The Obsidian Age: The Hunt for Aquaman* 5 of 7; Joe Kelly & Yvel Guichet + Mark Propst) The creature born from the depths of Atlantis continues to leech the Earth of its water, proclaiming itself the ruler of the realm as it fends off the new League, which has little hope of standing up to this adversary. But when a message from the past reaches the League in the present, a green ray of hope lights the way to a very unlikely ally. $2.25

one-shot **JLA: Terra Incognita** (various) New collection reprinting JLA #55-60 and featuring the World's Greatest Heroes. Some of the JLA's deadliest foes – the White Martians – have returned with a plan to systematically destroy each one of our heroes and disable the Earth's ability to create their one weakness: fire! 144pg $12.95

Point Blank 3 (Ed Brubaker & Colin Wilson; *WildStorm)* Dead men tell no tales, but what if you're in a coma? The truth about Lynch's dirty little secret is starting to come out. Who is Holden Carver, and what did Lynch have hanging so high over his head that no one else could see it? $2.95

Scooby-Doo 65 (John Rozum + Terrance Griep Jr. & various) In Peking's Imperial Palace lies the heart of the Dragon's Eye – the last piece of a rare and dangerous gem for which a mysterious thief will stop at nothing to own. It's up to Scooby and the gang to stop him. $2.25

Stormwatch: Team Achilles 4 (Micah Ian Wright & Whilce Portacio + Scott Williams; *WildStorm)* As the hunt for Ivana Baiul begins, a new member of the team is activated, and he may hold the key to locating one of the world's most dangerous terrorists. $2.95

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 46 (J. Michael Straczynski & John Romita Jr. + Scott Hanna) $2.25

Avengers Icons: The Vision 3 (Geoff Johns & Ivan Reis + Joe Pimenetel) Straight from the pages of Avengers, the spooky synthezoid sails into the spotlight. $2.99

Black Panther 50 (Christopher Priest & Dan Fraga + Larry Stucker) With T'Challa gone, who will take his place? And who is the man with the trenchcoat and guns? $2.50

The Call of Duty: The Precinct 4 (Bruce Jones & Tom Mandrake) Series exploring the lives of New York City's police officers. $2.25

Iron Man 60 (Mike Grell) Mike Grell writes, pencils and inks *In Shining Armor* part 2. ..... $2.25

new **Killraven** 1 (Alan Davis & Davis + Mark Farmer) In the not-so-distant future, Martians have invaded our world and laid waste to our civilization! Now, only Jonathan Raven – the gladiator known as Killraven – and his band of Freemen stand between Earth and utter annihilation. $2.99

new **Mekanix** 1 (Chris Claremont & Juan Bobillo + Marcelo Sosa) Chris Claremont returns to his favourite character, Kitty Pryde! What has the ex-X-Man been up to at the University of Chicago? $2.99

Spider-Man: Get Kraven 5 (Ron Zimmerman & John McCrea + James Hodgkinds) $2.25

Ultimate X-Men 23 (Mark Millar & Kaare Andrews + David McCaig) $2.25

X-Treme X-Men 19 (Chris Claremont & Salvador Larroca & Liquid!) A standalone issue kicks off a new direction for X-Treme X-Men. It's a cosy Thanksgiving at the X-Mansion – or is it? After getting conflicting messages from Jean Grey, the team makes an important decision about its very existence. $2.99

ON SALE WEEK ENDING

OCT 16

Dark Horse

one-shot **Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Tales of the Slayers – Broken Bottle of Djinn** (various) A tale of two Slayers: One is a young girl slumming through the bleak streets of 1930s New York City, and the other parades through the brighter streets of 1990s Sunnydale. Photo variant cover. $3.50

one-shot **Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Death of Buffy** (Fabian Nicieza + Tom Fassbender & Jim Pascoe + Cliff Richards; tpbk) Buffy's friends are trying to get on with their lives after her death. But a lovelorn demon has been set free into our dimension, and things aren't looking too hot. 120pg $15.95

Cannon God Exaxxion 10: Stage Two Part 2 (of 5; Kenichi Sonoda) The tension rises as Hoichi's school is the focus of attention. The occupying aliens have figured out that the kid in the gunsuit is connected to Hoichi's high school, and so they've begun a program of weeding out the possible perpetrators. What does it mean? Mature. b&w 40pg $3.50

one-shot **Go Girl!** (Trina Robbins & Anne Timmons; tpbk) Janet Goldman used to be a meat-and-potatoes superhero. But Go-Girl has now hung up her costume, and it's down to her teenage daughter Lyndsay to pick up where she left off, fighting crime and righting wrongs. 88pg b&w $11.95

DC Comics

one-shot **The Authority: Transfer of Power** (various; *WildStorm;* tpbk) Just when the Authority is at the height of its power, in the blink of an eye its is shattered and defeated. Taking its place is a new team with the same powers, looking vaguely similar, but possessing none of the original team's empathy, kindness, and humanity. Collects The Authority #22-29. 192pg $17.95

Automatic Kafka 4 (Joe Casey & Ashley Wood; *WildStorm)* The world of Automatic Kafka is both familiar and strange – twisted memories of a childhood spent surrounded by adults you could never understand. Just any old blockhead can live in it but it takes more than man's best friend to manoeuvre through it. $2.95

Batman: Gotham Knights 34 (Scott Beatty + Danielle Dwyer & various) A savage attack on an innocent woman triggers a development in the life of the Dark Knight. 40pg $2.75

Birds of Prey 48 (Terry Moore & Amanda Conner and Jimmy Palmiotti) Barbara Gordon, granted the gift of full mobility, saves the young girl Madison (a.k.a. Heartache) from a kidnapping attempt, and learns that the gift may be more of a curse than a blessing. $2.50

Black Sun 2 (Marc Andreyko & Trevor Scott; *WildStorm)* Maggie Sun is suspended from the force for disregarding her father's orders. But will a minor detail like that keep her from investigating the strange killings plaguing Hong Kong? $2.95

The Filth 5 (Grant Morrison & Chris Weston + Gary Erskine; *Vertigo)* Meet Anders Klimaaks, a Dutch porn star with a unique talent. Currently wanted by both the LAPD and Hand agent Jenesis Jones, Klimaaks is the unwitting key player in adult film mogul Tex Porneau's horrific plan to create a new kind of hardcore for a new world. Will the Hand have the spunk to handle this obscene threat, or could this be the money shot to end them all? $2.95

Gotham Girls 3 (Paul Storrie & Jennifer Graves + J. Bone) Harley Quinn gets control of a chemical formula everyone wants, which means that nothing goes as planned – not even for her best pal Poison Ivy. $2.25

one-shot **JLA: A League of One** (Christopher Moeller) An ancient dragon unleashes its fury upon the modern world, and the JLA tries to stop it – but Wonder Woman discovers that the League will perish unless she fights alone. 112pg $14.95

JSA 41 (David S. Goyer + Geoff Johns & Leonard Kirk + Keith Champagne) Hourman sees a horrible future – an attack on the Tyler Company, his father's business, which may be the catalyst to the unravelling of time itself. $2.50

Lucifer 31 *(Inferno* 3 of 4; Mike Carey & Peter Gross + Craig Hamilton; *Vertigo)* While Mazikeen is drowning in the thoughts of God, Lucifer fights to expel

Illuminations

Highlights from October's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

Two top-quality releases from Dark Horse this month. The long-awaited **Ghost in the Shell** sequel, **Man-Machine Interface**, has finally been translated. The original has been in constant demand over the last 10 years and the trade paperback just sells and sells. Masamune Shirow is a master artist and story teller and even without translation the 100 pages can be followed and the art hold you transfixed with a sense of awe. Motoko, a cyborg counter terrorist net expert transcends the physical world and exists in a virtual world of networks, a fusion of multiple entities deploying remotely controlled prosthetic humanoid surrogates around the globe to solve bizarre incidents. Superb. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Its other release is anthology title **Reveal**. As usual Dark Horse has collected a broad range of top talent, including a two-page comic strip by Pablo Picasso. There are two things working against this title, one the price $6.95 and two the fact it is an anthology. This is really what the industry should be producing, but the market is just not there yet. To this end it has included a Buffy tale which doesn't really sit well with work by Craig Thompson (**Goodbye Chunky Rice**) and R. Sikoryak (**Drawn & Quarterly**). **Sales 1/5 Quality 4/5**

Just as one Warren Ellis title reaches it's end (**Transmetropolitan**) a new one is launched. So Warren leaves Vertigo and pops next door to DC/WildStorm for his new release **Global Frequency**. A 12-issue maxi with a wide range of artists working on the series kicks off with art by Gary Leach. **Global Frequency** is an independent defence intelligence organization with 1001 agents world wide. When these sleeper agents get the call from Miranda Zero they embark on their mission to save the world. Mission Impossible anyone? Still, it is Warren and the list of up coming artists include such luminaries as Steve Dillon, Gene Ha and David Lloyd. **Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5**

Not a number one, but still worthy of mention is the long-awaited debut of Jim Lee on **Batman**. Scripted by award-winning author Jeph Loeb. **Batman** #608 starts a 12-issue uninterrupted storyline featuring such classic villains as Killer Croc, Poison Ivy, Catwoman, the Joker and Two Face. Jim Lee rose to worldwide fame after his debut in Uncanny **X-Men** #248 and further cemented his celebrity by being a founder member of Image. Now life goes full circle and he is back working for one of the big two and on one of the most famous there is. As a reader I am excited, as a retailer I am excited. There will be renewed interest in Batman, larger than the *Bruce Wayne Murderer* storyline recently stirred, watch Batman rise up the Top 100. **Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5**

Image has managed to secure Joseph Michael Linsner among its stable of talent and release in October **Vampire's Christmas**. Renowned for his self-published **Dawn** the lead character of this new release is the vampire Esque who has been haunting Linsner's work for the last 10 years. The story? What does a Vampire want for Christmas? Intriguing. Vampire stories always sell, Linsner always sells and Image sells better than self publishing. **Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5**

Marvel continues its revival of '70s comics with the release of **Killraven** #1. Unlike the revival of **Shangi Shi**, which is being created by the original artistic crew, **Killraven** is written and drawn by Alan Davis, inked by Mark Farmer who had nothing to do with the original series. Killraven started in **Amazing Adventures** #18 back in 1972 and told the tale of War of the Worlds, updated by 100 years as the Martians returned with a cure for the common cold that had defeated them previously. Alan Davis is ignoring all that went before and starting from the beginning with his vision of Killraven's fight for freedom. Sometimes my mind boggles at the decisions made, driven I expect by keeping copyright alive, when characters are pulled out of the wardrobe and cleared of cobwebs. This time at least it is by British fan favourite Alan Davis and this alone will support good sales. As a fan of the original run I am keeping my fingers crossed that he doesn't trash the concept. **Sales 3/5 Quality 5/5**

With 21 years of comic retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff has also been producing his Illuminations monthly fanzine for the last 19 years, free to his mail order customers.

the creature called Virtus from his mind and body. $2.50

Midnight, Mass 7 (John Rozum & Jesus Saiz + Jimmy Palmiotti; *Vertigo)* You never know who is going to come knocking on your door. Straight from the past come three uninvited visitors who reek of lies and secrets, and who may have a connection to Jenny's secret past. $2.50

The Power Company 9 *(Power Loss* 2 of 2; Kurt Busiek & Tom Grummett + Prentis Rollins) The story that shakes up the Power Company takes an unexpected turn. Josiah Power has fallen, and the Company is facing enemies from every direction, enemies who threaten the very life and livelihood of the Company. $2.75

The Powerpuff Girls 31 (Jennifer Moore + Sean Carolan & Phil Moy) Sugar, spice, and...shaving cream? The Gangreen Gang frames the Powerpuff Girls for a bunch of nasty Halloween pranks in *Trick or Beatings.* $2.25

Robin 107 (Jon Lewis & Pete Woods + Andrew Pepoy) The giant, creepy creature known as Charaxis hits town – or does he? Before he was transformed into Charaxis, he was Killer Moth. Now, his legacy is running about town, and mystery abounds as a series of crimes is committed simultaneously – by the same man! $2.25

Superman: The Man of Steel 131 *(Ending Battle* 7 of 8; Mark Schultz & Brandon Badeaux + Mark Morales) Facing the combined might of Mongul, Bizarro, Master Jailer and Silver Banshee, Superman doesn't stand a chance to get to Lois before she finds the unexpected visitor at her doorstep, and pays the ultimate price for her secrets. ... $2.25

Thundercats 3 (Ford Lytle Gilmore & Ed McGuinness + Jason Martin; *WildStorm)* When one of the Thunderkittens is kidnapped by Mumm-Ra the Everliving, the stage is set for a battle to the finish between Lion-O and Mumm-Ra – the Sword of Omens versus the Sword of Plundarr. .. $2.95

one-shot **Spider's Thrash** (Warren Ellis & Darick Robertson + Rodney Ramos; *Vertigo)* After losing his byline, bank account, and apartment, Jerusalem and his filthy assistants have legged it underground, the better to implement his plan. Reprints Transmetropolitan #37-42. 144pg $14.95

ON SALE FROM

OCT 23

Dark Horse

Ghost in the Shell 2 *(Man-Machine Interface* 1; Masamune Shirow) March 6, 2035. Motoko Aramaki is a hyper-advanced cyborg, and a counter-terrorist net security expert. There have been some strange changes in the temporal universe, and everything is about to go belly-up. Mature readers. 40pg . $3.99

Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Human Wonders 3 (of 4; Haden Blackman & Cary Nord) The third instalment of the Ripley's Believe It Or Not! series focuses on human oddities throughout history. Narrated by the original Siamese Twins, this issue covers human hyperboles, including the world's fattest twins, and explores the bizarre human afflictions that produce dog-faced boys and elephant men. b&w 24pg $2.99

Star Wars: Republic 47 (John Ostrander & C.P. Smith + Jasen Rodriguez) Obi-Wan and Anakin have their hands full protecting Senator Greyshade from attacks by droid assassins, sky-bike riding Dug assassins, and beautiful assassin princesses with diplomatic immunity. $2.99

DC Comics

Action Comics 796 *(Ending Battle* 8 of 8; Joe Kelly & Duncan Rouleau + Mario Alquiza) How far can Superman be pushed as he confronts the man behind this shocking storyline? $2.25

Batman 608 *(Hush* 1 of 12; Jeph Loeb & Jim Lee + Scott Williams) Batman attempts to bring an end to the vile kidnapping of an innocent child. But suddenly, all hell breaks loose. . $2.25

Catwoman 12 (Ed Brubaker & Cameron Stewart) Selina presents a very special gift to the East End in grand fashion while Slam Bradley displays his darker side. Holly rocks to her favourite band and a very deadly plan is put into motion, one that targets not just Catwoman, but Selina Kyle as well. $2.50

Dexter's Laboratory 32 (Robbie Busch + John Rozum & various) The whole family goes camping, with a little help from Dexter's nature-proof tent. $2.25

new **Global Frequency** 1 (Warren Ellis & Garry Leach; *WildStorm)* There are 1001 people on the Global Frequency, connected across a worldwide telecommunications spider web from Nova Scotia to Tasmania. You'll never know when you get the call, but when you do you have 30 minutes to save the world. Global Frequency – the last, best line of defence that you have never heard of. And if you're lucky, you never will. $2.95

one-shot **Green Arrow Secret Files** 1 (various) Discover the history of Oliver Queen – both before and after his death. $4.95

Green Lantern: Evil's Might 3 (Howard Chaykin + David Tischman & Marshall Rogers + John Cebollero; *Elseworlds)* Kyle Rayner isn't the only Green Lantern in Old New York City anymore. Now that Irish gangleader Alan Scott has got his hands on the secret Green Lantern, he's using it to siphon the Emerald energy to bring down the defender of the immigrant masses. 48pg $5.95

JLA 74 *(The Obsidian Age: The Hunt for Aquaman* 6 of 7; Joe Kelly & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) Certain that they are facing the prophesied "Destroyers," the Ancients use every power at their disposal to kill the JLA. Unable to reason with these battle-hardened warriors who are convinced they're saving the planet, the JLA has no choice: kill or be killed! $2.25

The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Vol. II #4 (Alan Moore & Kevin O'Neill; *America's Best Comics)* While felonious friends Mr Hyde and Captain Nemo lend their most needed aid in the defence of London and Mother England, Allan Quatermain and our Miss Mina head for a strange and memorable meeting on South Downs. $3.50

The Legion 13 (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & Olivier Coipel + Kev Walker) In the tense minutes before the Legion's final clash with Robotica for the fate of the galaxy, we glimpse the thoughts, fears and aspirations of many of the individuals surrounding the Legionnaires and the United Planets. $2.50

Supergirl 75 (Peter David & Ed Benes + Alex Lei) When a spacecraft crashes down outside Leesburg, Supergirl races over to the destroyed craft to look for survivors, and finds – Supergirl? $2.50

Y – The Last Man 4 *(Unmanned* 4 of 5; Brian K. Vaughan & Pia Guerra + José Marzan, Jr; *Vertigo)* Yorick Brown joins hundreds of women at a monument to pay tribute to the men who died in the Plague. But when a pack of violent female extremists interrupts this memorial service, the last man on Earth may end up joining his fallen brothers. $2.95

Marvel

Captain America 6 (John Ney Rieber & John Cassaday; *Marvel Knights)* The hard-hitting conclusion to the opening story arc. $2.99

Elektra: Glimpse & Echo 4 (of 4; Scott Morse) The lush, fully painted miniseries concludes. $2.99

Fantastic Four 62 (Mark Waid & Mike Wieringo + Karl Kesel) A new story begins with *Sentient* part 1. 48pg $2.25

The Hood 6 (Brian K. Vaughan & Kyle Hotz + Eric Powell; *MAX Comics)* Concluding MAX's street-level look into the mind of a new villain. Mature readers. $2.99

Shang-Chi: Master of Kung Fu 2 (Doug Moench & Paul Gulacy; *MAX Comics)* The martial arts spy action continues in this new MAX series. Mature readers. $2.99

Spider-Man: Blue 6 (Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale) $3.50

Spider-Man's Tangled Web 19 (Robbie Morrison & Jim Mahfood) Animals attack as Grizzly and the Rhino get a standalone issue. $2.99

Weapon X #2 (Frank Tieri & Georges Jeanty + Dexter Vines) She may be a hottie now, but Marrow is still deadly. $2.25

ON SALE FROM

OCT 30

Dark Horse

Astro Boy Vol 8 (Osamu Tezuka) Astro remains stranded in the 20th century, but he's not laying about. Astro must save the Earth from a Martian fungus, while having to juggle a dozen other things at once. 200pg b&w $9.95

Buffy the Vampire Slayer 50 *(Hellmouth To Mouth* 4 of 4; various) Buffy finally rescues Xander and Dawn from the crew that's nearly destroyed Sunnydale – The Scourge! They soon find that the only thing worse than the Scourge is their secret leader, revealed this issue. 40pg Photo variant. .. $3.50

Lone Wolf and Cub Vol 26: Battle in the Dark (Kozuo Koike & Goseki Kojima; tpbk) The ronin Itto Ogamie has walked a path of demons with Daigoro at his side, on a quest of vengeance and death that has shaken the very foundations of the Samurai caste. Mature readers. 312pg b&w $9.95

Super Manga Blast! 26 (various) The year of Shirow in Super Manga Blast! is just getting started, and as autumn sets in, it's time to consider how to pass those winter days on the way. $5.99

Usagi Yojimbo 61 (Stan Sakai) Chizu was once the feared leader of the deadly Neko Ninja Clan, demanding respect and loyalty from those around her. But circumstances have made her a fugitive, and now she's running for her life, hunted by the clan that she used to command. b&w 24pg $2.99

DC Comics

Batman: Gotham Adventures 55 (Scott Peterson & Rick Burchett + Terry Beatty) Batman finds himself caught in a deadly quarrel between mobsters, each claiming the other kidnapped his wife. He's got to help them out – or risk a full-fledged mob war. $2.25

Codename: Knockout 18 *(Amok in America* 3 of 3; Robert Rodi & Ed Benes + Alex Lei; *Vertigo)* Angela meets Amora, the woman who's shadowed her life since the series began. Plus, Anita Manaday learns of Damon Devlin's treachery, and Go-Go finally faces John Thomas, freelance detective. $2.75

one-shot **The Dark Knight Strikes Again** (Frank Miller; hbk) Frank Miller's sequel to The Dark Knight Returns is gathered together for the first time. Features an introduction and commentary by Miller on returning to the world he created 15 years ago, and includes the complete 3-part story, plus sketches, colour samples and other material. 256pg $29.95

Fight for Tomorrow 2 (Brian Wood & Denys Cowan + Kent Williams; *Vertigo)* After his crushing defeat in the local underground fighting circuit, Cedric Zhang wakes to find himself in the care and company of the Buddhist temple girl and her little hoodlum brother. Deep in a coma and delirious from his injuries, we catch glimpses into his violent and abusive past, hinting at a tragic loss. $2.50

The Flash 191 (Geoff Johns & Scott Kolins + Doug Hazlewood) The Winged Wonder joins the Fastest Man Alive as they tackle the fairytale horrors of Brother Grimm! Trolls and dragons descend on Keystone City, and Hawkman and the Flash must trust one another long enough to rescue its citizens. $2.25

Green Arrow 18 *(The Archers Quest* 3 of 6; Brad Meltzer & Phil Hester + Ande Parks) Arsenal and Green Arrow take a trip to their old estate – and hopefully this trip won't lead to the morgue. While searching for a mystery item, Ollie discovers a new resident in the Arrowcave. $2.50

Hellblazer 177 *(Red Sepulchre* 1 of 4; Mike Carey & Marcelo Frusin; *Vertigo)* Back in the Smoke for the first time in two years, John has walked into the middle of an ugly range war between

Marvel

The Call of Duty: The Wagon 3 (Chuck Austen & Daniel Zezelj) Series exploring the lives of New York City's EMS workers. $2.25

Captain Marvel 2 (Peter David & ChrisCross) $2.25

Daredevil 38 (Brian Michael Bendis & Manuel Gutierrez; *Marvel Knights)* Matt Murdock is on the defence in part one of *The Trial of White Tiger.* $2.99

Incredible Hulk 46 (Bruce Jones & Stuart Immonen + Scott Koblish) A new story arc begins. $2.25

Marville 2 (Bill Jemas & M.D. Bright + Paul Neary) $2.25

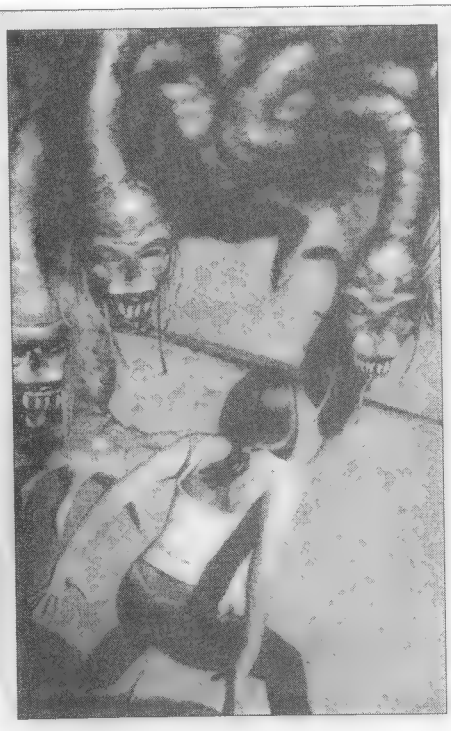
New X-Men 133 (Grant Morrison & Ethan Van Sciver + Norm Rapmund) A new mutant is introduced – but what will she mean to the X-Men? $2.25

Peter Parker: Spider-Man 49 (Paul Jenkins & Mark Buckingham) .. $2.25

Soldier X 4 (Darko Macan & Igor Kordey) The ground shakes when Geo debuts – and kicks Soldier X's butt. $2.25

Thunderbolts 73 (Fabian Nicieza & Manuel Garcia + Al Vey) $2.25

Ultimate Adventures 2 (Ron Zimmerman & Duncan Fegredo) $2.25



DC close-up

The Sandman Presents: The Furies

DC/Vertigo

Writer: Mike Carey

Artist: John Bolton

In the three years since Daniel left to fulfil his destiny as the new Sandman, Lyta has suffered greatly from the loss of her only son. Now the bloodline that has made her kin to the Furies has taken over her senses... and her sanity. In an effort to unravel her mysterious heritage, Lyta accepts a job with a traveling theatre troupe on its way to Athens, Greece. 96pg $24.95

ON SALE OCTOBER 30

rival groups of magicians. Like it or not, he's going to have to choose a side; and it would help if he knew which faction wants him dead. $2.75

Out There 14 *(The War in Hell* 2 of 6; Brian Augustyn & Humberto Ramos + Sandra Hope; *WildStorm)* With Draedalus dead, his minions run amok in every realm, there's a battle royale in the Draedrealm – as the townspeople face off with Gask, Skink and the other imps, who seem to be taking their leader's death personally. $2.95

Promethea 23 (Alan Moore & J.H. Williams III + Mick Gray; *America's Best Comics)* It's the Absolute Godhead at the end of the Kaballah quest – the long and winding road back from the brink of infinity. Sophie finally returns to the mortal plane, to her own Earth, to see how things have been since her departure. 40pg $3.50

The Resistance 2 (Jimmy Palmiotti + Justin Gray & Juan Santacruz + Francis Portela; *WildStorm)* Where do you go to enjoy what little life has to offer when you know you could be dead in the morning? Brian Strumm discovers the answer in the Orphanage – a vile, dangerous, decadent place where the outlaw Strayz gather to blow off steam and make plans for the desperate revolution. $2.95

one-shot **The Sandman Presents: The Furies** (Mike Carey & John Bolton; *Vertigo;* hbk) *See Close-Up, on previous page.*

The Shazam! Archives Vol 3 (C.C. Beck & various; hbk) Reprints America's Greatest Comics #1, Captain Marvel Adventures #2 and #3, and Whiz Comics #21-24 (1941). Captain Marvel faces his most nefarious foe Dr Sivana in three adventures. $49.95

The Titans 46 (Tom Peyer + Barry Kitson & Peter Grau + James Pascoe) In their search for the reasons behind their visitations by the long-dead spirits of their past, Jesse and Damage are joined by the other Titans – only to discover an imposing complex under the desert. $2.75

Tom Strong's Teriffic Tales 5 (various; *America's Best Comics)* When Tom Strong agreed to appear on a set of bubble-gum trading cards, he had no idea how hazardous the assignment would become. Will his family make it through the shoot? $2.95

Wildcats Version 3.0 #3 (Joe Casey & Dustin Nguyen + Richard Friend; *WildStorm)* Grifter and Agent Wax's discovery of the hypothalamic chamber leads to an unlikely alliance with CC Rendozzo. But will this volatile partnership yield the results each seeks? $2.95

Wonder Woman 186 (Phil Jimenez & Jimenez + Andy Lanning) Wonder Woman is trying to track down the male Cheetah, while Troia is still on the trail of Angle Man. Their two quests come together when they uncover Barbara Minerva, the original female Cheetah, who is harnessing the power of the Furies for revenge against the man who stole her power. ... $2.25

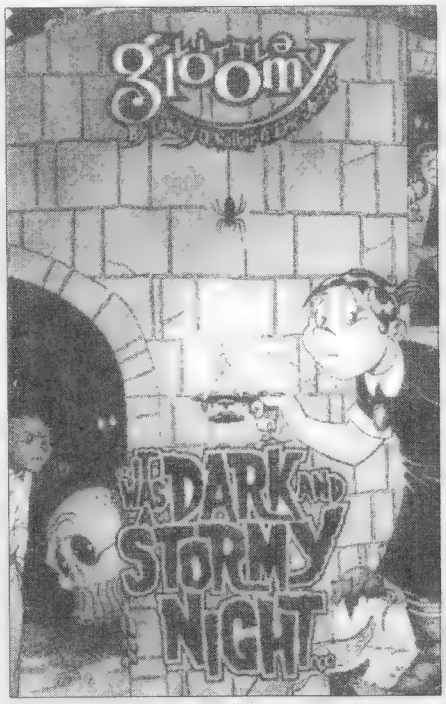
Marvel

Agent X #4 (Gail Simone & Alvin Lee + Udon) Who is Mary Zero? $2.25

Apache Skies 4 (John Ostrander & Leonardo Manco; *MAX Comics)* Concluding MAX's fully painted wicked Western. Mature readers. $2.99

Avengers 59 *(World Trust* 3 of 4; Geoff Johns & Kieron Dwyer + Rick Remender) $2.25

The Call of Duty: The Brotherhood 5 (Chuck Austen & David Finch + Art Thibert) Exploring the lives of New York City's firefighters and looking at the amazing stuff they did a year ago. $2.25



close-up

Little Gloomy Vol 1

Amaze Ink/Slave Labor

Writer: Landry Walker

Artists: Eric Jones

What happens when your name is Gloomy and you're the only human girl in a world filled with monsters? How about when your mad ex-scientist boyfriend vows to destroy you? And what if your monster friends are all secretly in love with you, repressing the constant desire to hunt you down for food? Find out in this collection of Little Gloomy #1-4. 128pg b&w $12.95

ON SALE OCTOBER

Paradise X #6 (Alex Ross + Jim Krueger & Doug Braithwaite + Bill Reinhold) $2.99

Punisher 18 (Garth Ennis & Steve Dillon + Tim Bradstreet; *Marvel Knights)* The Punisher comes face-to-face with terrorism in Northern Ireland. ... $2.99

Spider-Man/Black Cat: The Evil That Men Do 5 (Kevin Smith & Terry Dodson + Rachel Dodson) $2.99

The Ultimates 9 (Mark Millar & Bryan Hitch + Andrew Currie) $2.25

Wolverine 182 (Frank Tieri & Sean Chen) $2.25

X-Statix 4 (Peter Milligan & Mike Allred + Darwyn Cooke) $2.25

RELEASED & ON SALE IN

OCTOBER

Aardvark-Vanaheim

Cerebus 283 *(Latter Days* 18 of 35; Dave Sim & Gerhard) Cerebus continues his study of obscure, sacred text Konigsberg the not-so-good Samaritan has brought him. 24pg b&w $2.25

Abstract Studios

Strangers In Paradise 54 (Terry Moore) This issue begins a three-part story-arc focusing on the intertwined love lives of Katchoo and Francine with the Silver Surfer Brothers Brad and Griffin. 24pg b&w $2.95

Terry Moore's Paradise Too! #10 (Terry Moore) Terry decides he's ready to become a he-man and begins a rigorous workout routine, limiting his soda pops to one an hour. 24pg b&w . $2.95

Alternative Comics

Bipolar 3 (Tomer Hanuka, Assaf Hanuka + Etgar Keret) *Pizzeria Kamikaze* continues as suicide casualties Mordi and Ari, embark on a journey to find Mordi's lost love in their unique after life. In *Telekinetic* a chronic stomach-ache and a picture that won't stay still pushes our hero to discover the legend of Shmilove. 36pg b&w $2.95

one-shot **Bogus Dead Anthology** (various; tpbk) Human corpses rise from the dead to devour the living! Within weeks, only a handful of people remain, fighting desperately to survive the zombies' inexhaustible appetite for human flesh. 144pg b&w $9.95

Rubber Necker 2 (Nick Bertozzi) This issue presents a fistfight, a painter, teddy bears, some corn, a man, a scent, and an obsession. $3.50

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

Charm School 6 (Elizabeth Watasin) Dean is set to race through the Demonic Gates, but Fairer Than challenges her to a fight to the death! Can anything more go wrong for Dean? Mature readers. 24pg b&w $2.95

Gloom Cookie 14 (Serena Valentino & Breehn Burns) Everyone's life is thrown into chaos with the disappearance of Damion and the emergence of the mysterious Artemus – not to mention the monster's strange behaviour. Mature readers. 24pg b&w $2.95

Halo & Sprocket 3 (Kerry Callen) Find out why you shouldn't let an angel and a robot babysit your child. Plus, find out why you should let an angel and a robot talk to tele-sales callers. .. $2.95

Highway 13 #8 (Les McClaine) John Rogers is making his way across the country with his assistants Garth and Lucinda, gathering research for his book. When they stumble across a shadowy government project gone horribly awry, the only research possible is adventure! 24pg b&w $2.95

new **Likewise** 1 (Ariel Schrag) Ariel begins the chronicle of her senior year of high school with attention to detail and nuances of teenage life that are as universal as her own experiences are unique. If you catch my drift. Mature readers. 40pg b&w $4.95

one-shot **Little Gloomy** Vol 1 (Landry Walker & Eric Jones; tpbk) *See Close-Up, above*

Antarctic Press

new **Cybertronian: The Unofficial Transformers Recognition Guide Beast Wars** Vol 1 (various) Does what it says on the tin, plus it provides a detailed episode guide for the first two seasons of the *Beast Wars* TV series. 96pg $24.95

Gold Digger 36 (Fred Perry) The Lich King has begun his campaign to retake the Realm of the Undead. His first task is to turn Dr Theodore Diggers to his path. 24pg $2.99

new **Killbox: Primer** 1 (Brian Denham) Marine Corps tank commander Lalone heads his men into the heart of battle to deliver humanitarian supplies. When the army advances, his escape route is cut off. What's he gonna do? Pelt them with sandwiches? b&w $2.99

Luftwaffe: 1946 #2 (Ted Nomura & various) Dora and Gus are now faced with the possibility of Germany's bombing America. In *Tigers of the Terra,* Reina confronts a new threat as the Viragonians launch genetically enhanced soldiers. 48pg b&w $5.95

Ninja High School 99 (Ben Dunn) For years, Leondo Rivalson has competed with Jeremy Feeple for the heart of Ichi Koo. Now, in the final battle, Leondo loses horribly while cross-dressing and dies a horrible death. 24pg $2.99

PPV 3 (Tom Root & Jerzy Drozd) High School kids with superpowers are beating the black tar out of each other for the entertainment of some creepy aliens. A handful of survivors must face off against a few newcomers who are stronger than them all put together. b&w $2.95

Warrior Nun Areala 11 (Craig Babiar) Areala has recently adopted an aggressive nature which seems to be interfering with her duties as a warrior nun. Tensions begin to rise within St Illumine Church as a friendly training exercise ends in a fierce battle. 24pg b&w $2.99

Avatar Press

Alan Moore's Magic Words Vol 1 (Alan Moore & various; graphic novel) Adaptation of some of Moore's songs, poems and writings into sequential art, by a group of European artists. b&w 56pg $6.95

Ennis' & Mccrea's Dicks 2 #2 (of 4; Garth Ennis & John McCrea) Ennis and McCrea return with a new Dicks series. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

Warren Ellis' Strange Killings: The Body Orchard #4 (of 6; Warren Ellis & Mike Wolfer) The mysteries of the Body Orchard deepen as the tale of William Gravel unfolds. Friendly fire doesn't only kill civilians. It kills soldiers too. Many British soldiers have died under American fire. And in the world of William Gravel, where it has been hinted that the top echelons of the British military work to keep American society chaotic and destabilised... well, some British soldiers may take matters into their own hands. Mature. b&w $3.50

one-shot **Jungle Fantasy Preview** (Al Rio & Rio + Sean Shaw) A sneak-peek at the awesome dinosaur carnage, crazed caveman and bikini clad women inside the regular series that launches soon! Mature Readers b&w 16pg $1.99

Tim Vigil's Webwitch 3 (of 3; Tim Vigil) Nina the Webwitch has lead the Marines' assault on the Spidernation hidden cave. But things have gone horrifically wrong and not only have the Marines been slaughtered, but the Queen has taken control of Nina again! Mature readers. b&w $3.50

new **Zak Raven, Esq.** #1 (Darren Davis & Renato Arlem) Zak Raven is through with the nine-to-five grind and is now an ex-attorney on a mission to relax. However a peaceful trip goes really wrong when he get shipwrecked on what he thinks is a deserted island. His only companions are his own words in his journal. Unknown to Zak, four miles below the surface secretly hides a government experimentation centre where scientists are playing God by trying to artificially evolve a human based species that can survive evacuation missions in deep space. $3.50

Bongo Comics

Radioactive Man 106 (Las + DeCarlo & Smith + Morrison) Why is Radioactive Man fighting invisible enemies and causing collateral damage throughout Zenith City? Has he gone mad? $2.50

Simpsons Comics 75 (Boothby & Ortiz) Join Principal Seymour Skinner as he takes you on a trip through Springfield Elementary's Permanent Record file. $2.50

Chaos! Comics

new **Evil Ernie: The Horror** 1 (Brian Pulido & Gerardo Sandoval) Sensing a recently murdered child, Evil Ernie resurrects her and learns about her killer. Further investigation reveals a hideous plot where the lives of countless innocents were stolen by priests perceived as the most holy and moral. 40pg b&w $4.50

one-shot **Lady Death Halloween Special** 1 (Brad Kayl) A Halloween story that just may be too much for the Goddess of the Netherworld! It appears that a mysterious being is behind some grisly murders. Who is this being and what happens when Lady Death comes across the God of Fear and can she stop him before he corrupts the world to his mad ways? $2.99

new **Purgatori: Trick Or Treat** 1 (Dan Jolley & Fabiano Neves + Sandu Florea) In her continuing search for clues to the ancient vampire

religion called the Blood Faith, Sakkara and her lover Rakshasa arrive at the Greek isle of Crete just in time for Halloween $2.99

Lady Death: Dark Alliance 5 (of 5) (John Ostrander & Ivan Reis + Joe Pimentel) The Dark Alliance is coming apart as the face of the true villain is revealed! Death has already claimed one member of the alliance and more may follow. Humanity is now aware of Lady Death, Jade, Purgatori, Vandala and Vulnavia and the howl you hear is for their death! $2.99

CrossGen

The First 24 (various) When events begin to spiral out of control, it's up to House Sinister's first Leader to set them right. Will a House already mired in chaos be destroyed by a madman? Seahn faces his own madman...one determined to end the trouble caused by the renegade Secundae's defection to House Sinister. $2.95

Meridian 28 (various) Convinced she's done nothing right, Sephie finds reassuring words in a message from her father, captain of the first expedition of the sunship. The story seems to come to life beneath her fingers. $2.95

Meridian 29 (various) Sephie's been on the wrong side of the law. As a pirate, she used force to change the waves of trade. So what happens when she finds herself on the other side of the diplomatic equation when refugees from Torbel come to Cadador – armed and ready to take the island for their own? $2.95

Mystic 29 (various) Giselle's quest for the wisdom of the Guilds leads her to a sensual realm as she visits the land of the Tantric Guild, where the mysteries of the flesh are the key to magical power. But as she journeys through this carnal kingdom, Giselle's in for a rude surprise. $2.95

new **Negation: Lawbringer** 1 (various) On a remote world of the Negation Imperium, the freakish and frightening Lawbringer Qztr learns the secrets of his own origin and that of his creator, the God-Emperor Charon. See the moment when the Negation Empire was born and be there for the fate of Charon's long lost second-in-command. $2.95

one-shot **Negation Trade Paperback 1: Bohica!** (various) *See Close-Up, right.*

Negation 11 (various) The greatest general in the Negation's universe-spanning military has been given the job of tracking down some mysterious newcomers wreaking havoc in the outer systems. When his path crosses with Kaine's fugitives, a wild three-way confrontation ensues in which the truly vast might of the Negation's top brass is put to the test. $2.95

one-shot **The Path Trade Paperback 1: Crisis of Faith** (various; tpbk) Telling the story of a monk who swears vengeance against the gods after watching them slay his warlord brother, this volume collects the Prequel and issues #1-6 of the series. $11.95

The Path 7 (various) The army of the vast empire of Shinacea marches upon Nayado's vulnerable capital. The only thing standing in its way – the remnants of Nayado's own military, led by General Ryuichi. $2.95

The Path 8 (various) With Ryuichi's army on the brink of being wiped out by invaders, their lone hope rests with Obo-san. But will even the Weapon of Heaven be enough to turn back Shinacea's overwhelming forces? $2.95

Route 666 #5 (various) Cassie hits the rails as she flees the ever-expanding police dragnet searching for her. But as any hobo can tell you, there are some pretty weird folk out there haunting boxcars, stations and sidings. $2.95

Ruse 13 (various) Impatient with the speed of repairs, Simon has left Partington's borders for a restful distraction – a small case involving a shipping mogul who has asked Simon to investigate the mysterious wrecking of certain ships in his fleet. $2.95

Scion 28 (various) Romance is in the air – finally – for Ethan and Ashleigh. Since giving in to their attraction the pair have hardly had a chance to catch their breath, much less make time to explore their newfound love. But now that they actually have a chance to be together, will they discover they're not meant for each other after all? $2.95

Sigil 29 (various) See Sam and Khyradon in a battle that only one can survive. Even if Sam wins, it will be at a terrible cost. And a horrifying surprise awaits Roiya, JeMerik and Zanni as they leave the Saurian world of Tcharun. $2.95

Sojourn 16 (various) In order to find the Second Fragment, Arwyn searches for the Dawn Sword deep in the catacombs of the Ankharan cliffs. But the dead do not lie quietly in their tombs! $2.95

Sojourn Trade Paperback 2: The Dragon's Tale (various) Arwyn's quest for the Five Fragments begins in earnest as she and her companions, Gareth and Kreeg, begin their search in the human lands of Middelyn. Collecting issues #7-12 of the series. $11.95

Ruse 12 (various) After years of plotting and planning, Lightbourne's quest for the Enigmatic Prism comes to a fruitful and fateful end! Now Simon and Emma risk their lives to save the city of Partington, facing the enemy on a familiar but surprising battlefield. $2.95

Way of the Rat 6 (various) Boon Sai Hong must call on all of his new talents to save his own life and the lives of thousands of the city's inhabitants. But the Khan has a nasty revelation that may throw the fight his way. $2.95

Claypool

Deadbeats 56 (Richard Howell) The lure of the family proves too much for Madame Melina to withstand. It's too bad she's been transformed into a voracious vampire... How will the kids react when they find Mother's home? b&w $2.50

Elvira 114 (various) What's worse – the fact that Elvira has been made to seem like a traitor by the rulers of Altoonis, or that they are unleashing monsters on the world? b&w $2.50

Drawn & Quarterly

Louis Riel 8 (Chester Brown) Depicting the climax of the brutal battle between the Canadian army and Louis Riel's group of Metis followers. As they are outnumbered and outgunned by a ratio of four to one, Riel retreats into a trench and prays for their salvation while his followers scramble for extra bullets. 24pg b&w $2.95

Dreamwave

Arkanium 2 (Easton & Thomas + Stull) As the US and China brace for political fallout from the theft of the Arkanium scrolls, Rowan and Shin meet for the very first time. $2.95

Fate of the Blade 3 (Sarracini & Yame + Sander) Mya continues on her path of vengeance, determined to balance out the loss of the only love she's ever known. Mature readers. $2.95

Limbo City 2 (Brian Augustyn & Brett Booth) Through the miracles and mysteries of Limbo City's metaphysical origins, Angelic PI Sam Angelo can enter a client's Earhtly life, in any time period or location. Right now he's in 1930s New York City, with gangsters, corrupt politicians and a thousand other threats giving him gip. $2.95

Transformers: Armada 4 (various) The race for the Mini-Cons is on. Megatron and his evil Decepticons will stop at nothing to capture as many Mini-Cons as they can – even if the Earth suffers in the process. $2.95

new **Transformers: The War Within** 1 (Simon Furman & Son Figueroa) Facing a devastating civil war on Cybertron, Optimus Prime must meet the challenge. Before he can deal with the threat posed by Megatron and the Decepticons, the new Autobot leader must look within, and decide if Cybertron is worth saving at all. $2.95

Fantagraphics Books

one-shot **Beg The Question** (Bob Fingerman) Here's the story of Rob and Sylvia, two mutually attracted 20-somethings in New York. We follow them through courtship and marriage, rentals to real estate, public sex, unwanted pregnancies, and everything in between. 240pg b&w $24.95

Blab! Vol 15 (various) Anthology. *Raw* artist Sue Coe hits the Blab pages with a six page story entitled *Ghost Tiger*, while *Little Lit* illustrator Marc Rosenthal contributes *Un Crise de style* – a tour de force of two interlocking comic strips. 120pg $19.95

Comics Journal #248 (various) This month Steve Rude is given a bit of the old spotlight, where he talks about his life, his art, and his experiences working for Marvel and DC. He also gets into talking about his Magnum Opus, Nexus. Mature readers. 128pg b&w $6.95

Hate Annual #3 (Peter Bagge) Featuring a *Buddy Bradley* adventure, dealing with Lisa's new-found obsession with crafting and decorating. Also, a satire of the daily strip Dibert, called *Dildobert*, in which a popular cubicle dweller is compelled to join a terrorist organisation. Mature readers. 48pg $3.95

one-shot **Zippy Annual 2002** (Bill Griffith) Collects around a year's worth of strips, including full colour Sundays, from 2001 to 2002. Includes several continuing storylines. 160pg $19.95

Image

Athena Inc 4 (Brian Haberlin & Jay Anacleto) Gwen begins to realize what she is, and the realisation is driving her crazy. She is losing it. But the warm hand of help is being offered by the cold heart of Athena Inc. itself, Morgan Castle. $2.95

Battle of the Planets 4 (Munier Sharrieff & Wilson Tortosa + Shane Law; *Top Cow*) Who is the mysterious and nefarious Zoltar? And how far will he go in his quest to infiltrate, conquer and annihilate all of humanity? $2.99

G.I. Joe 11 (Josh Blaylock & Kevin Sharpe + John Larter) Cobra's latest experiment terrorizes the Dreadnok compound in Chicago, but when its path of destruction spreads out into the city streets, G.I.Joe intervenes. $2.95

new **G.I. Joe: Frontline** 1 (Larry Hama & Dan Jurgens + Bob Layton) It's 1994, just after the government mothballed the classic G.I. Joe organisation – or did they? Cobra is still up to its dirty tricks, and there's only one group of people qualified to stop them. $2.95

Hellspawn 18 (Steve Niles & Ben Templesmith) Someone has escaped the grips of Hell and has begun a killing spree to end all killing sprees. You can hear his laughter and the sound of his whisper in your ear when you sleep. But how do stop a killer who is already dead? $2.50

Holy Terror 2 (Jason Caskey & Phil Hester + Jim Woodyard) Max Brody's role as The Holy Terror has become the hottest gimmick in AWF wrestling. The only problem is no other wrestler wants to step in the ring with him. Is it jealousy over Max's rise to fame, or do they really fear facing him, even in fixed fight? $2.95

Leave It To Chance Vol II: Trick Or Threat and Other Stories (James Robinson & Paul Smith; hbk) Collects original issues #5-8, introducing our intrepid heroine to a new circle of friends, and pitting Chance against a new cast of dastardly villains, misunderstood monsters, and otherworldly apparitions. 112pg $14.95

Liberty Meadows 28 (Frank Cho) Poor Frank the vet. Ralph and Leslie resequenced his DNA and gave him a whole new look to help him capture Brandy's heart – unfortunately, they've neglected to them Frank that they've based the new DNA sequence on Dean's DNA. b&w $2.95

Micronauts 3 (Scott Wherle & Eric Hanson + Barb Shulz) As the noble warrior Acroyear continues to shelter Ryan Archer from harm in Baron Karza's holding pens, rumours begin to spread amongst the other prisoners of Ryan's importance to the revolution. $2.95

new **Noble Causes: Family Secrets** 1 (Jay Faerber & various) In an attempt to get on with her life following the death of her husband, Liz Donnelly-Noble gives her first solo interview on live television – something the Noble family isn't sure she's ready for. $2.95

Paradigm 2 (Matthew Cashel & Jeremy Haun) Video tapes, recordable DVDs, and episode 22 of Moonlighting; what happens in a world where passions run too strongly, when obsession creates new understanding? 40pg b&w . $3.50

Savage Dragon 104 (Erik Larsen) This issue will be the biggest change in the life of the Savage Dragon ever, they promise us that at least. $2.95

one-shot **Savage Dragon/ Hellboy: The Collected Edition** (Erik Larsen) Collects Savage Dragon #34 and #35 for the first time. When Dragon's arch foe starts to decompose, a spell is cast to draw the undead from around the globe to Chicago. With Hellboy in hot pursuit, an ape with an exposed brain commands the Christmas-coloured couple to clobber each other. 48pg $5.95

one-shot **Savage Dragonbert: Full Frontal Nerdity** (Karl Hornell) From the pages of Savage Dragon

close-up

Negation Tpb 1: Bohica!

CrossGen Comics

Writers/Artists: various

The saga of a small band of fugitives on the run in a hostile universe begins here in this volume collecting the Negation Prequel and issues #1 to #6. Awakening on a strange, inhospitable alien planet, 100 strangers snatched from worlds across the galaxy discover that they have been brought to a separate, evil universe to be studied and tested by the greatest threat humanity has ever faced. $11.95

ON SALE OCTOBER

comes Savage Dragonbert – an absurd superhero comics parody. Working at a small Image studio, superhero/engineer Dragonbert, his jaded co-workers and his ever-conspiring roommate, Hitler's Brainbert, take satire to new lows. Complete collection of all published Savage Dragonbert material from the pages of Savage Dragon, plus outtakes, unfinished stories and bonus jokes. 80pg b&w $5.95

Spawn 127 (Brian Holguin + Todd McFarlane & Angel Medina + Danny Miki) An old foe returns in a new guise, whipping up mischief and chaos in the shadows of the New York City alleys. But there is method in this madness, a growing web of intrigue that is quickly tightening around the Hellspawn. $2.50

Superpatriot: America's Fighting Force 4 (Robert Kirkman & Cory Walker) Baron Blitzkrieg's plan finally come to a head, but why isn't he in the driver's seat? Johnny instead finds himself face to face with his most deadly foe yet: A mechanical menace of Nazi origin! $2.95

one-shot **Tellos: Sons and Moons** (Todd Dezago & Tracie Mauk + Eric Hanson) *See Close-Up, right.*

Tomb Raider 25 *(Endgame* 1 of 3; John Ney Rieber & Michael Turner + Jonathan D. Smith; *Top Cow)* The charred remains of a long-lost Native American settlement lure Lara Croft to New York City the home of Sara Pezzini and the Witchblade, and it ends with – the death of Lara Croft. So it seems. $2.99

Tomb Raider: Journeys 7 (Fiona Avery & Marlo Alquiza + Jonathan D. Smith; *Top Cow)* Lara Croft begins her digging into the mystery of the stolen Maori Dream-Spear. Finding the right information will come only after she agrees to a duel shoot-out with the man who knows what she's looking for. It seems that Down Under, Lara is wanted more dead than alive. $2.99

Witchblade 60 *(Endgame* 2 of 3; David Wohl & Francis Manapul + Jason Gorder; *Top Cow)* Sara Pezzini searches for answers to what caused the terrible fate of her friend and cohort, Lara Croft. What she discovers is an entity as old as the Witchblade itself, but much more deadly and evil. $2.99

one-shot **Top Cow Classics: Tomb Raider/Witchblade** 1 (Michael Turner & Joe Weems + Jonathan D. Smith; *Top Cow)* Top Cow Classics presents the original special that started it all, Tomb Raider/Witchblade. b&w . $2.99

one-shot **Tomb Raider/ Witchblade: Trouble Seekers** (Michael Turner + Bill O'Neil & various; *Top Cow;* tpbk) Contains the first ever meeting of these two ultra-beauties. Also includes the hard to find Witchblade/Tomb Raider ½ issue, wrapped in a new cover by Michael Turner. 80pg $7.95

one-shot **Vampire's Christmas** (Joseph Michael Linsner & Linsner + Mike Dubisch) At Christmas time, all dreams come true. What do vampires dream of? Blood, of course. Lots of it. Esque, the vampire, is no different, but in Santa's eyes he's been more naughty than nice. 48pg $5.95

Oni Press

one-shot **Blue Monday: Dead Man's Party** (Chynna Clugston-Major) It's one of the gang's famous Hallowe'en parties, with costumes galore and plenty of punch and pie. Only this time they've brought their scariest stories with them. Mature readers b&w $2.95

close-up

Tellos: Sons & Moons

Image Comics

Writer: Todd Dezago

Artists: Tracie Mauk + Eric Hanson

Tellos is a magical patchwork made up of a myriad of different realms, populated by creatures of myth and legend. The first tale, *Night Flight* recounts the less-than-romantic first meeting between the Pirate Queen, Serra and the adventurous thief, Hawke. Next is *Jealous Skies*, which reveals the secret of Hawke's wings. Finally, *Legend of Oge K'Tion* is the story of the Amulet. 48pg ... $5.95

ON SALE OCTOBER

Hopeless Savages: Ground Zero #4 (of 4; Van Meter & O'Maley + Norrie) Following the fiasco at the talent show, Zero isn't sure things could get any worse. Is she right or wrong? One thing's for sure, a surprise is coming, and that'll show her. b&w $2.95

new **Kissing Chaos: Nonstop Beauty** 1 (of 4; Arthur Dela Cruz) Ashley is a member of a subversive, underground collective of artists who are planning to set up an anarchic social explosion. But a little email skulduggery sends careful laid plans awry. Mature readers 24pg b&w $2.95

Mutant, Texas: Tales of Sheriff Ida Red 4 (of 4; Paul Dini & J. Bone) As the tale of Ida Red's origin comes to a close, our heroine takes on the forces of evil in a desperate showdown, with the very existence of Mutant, Texas in the balance. b&w $2.95

One Plus One #2 (of 5; Neal Shaffer & Daniel Krall) Eddie is a cardshark who like dangerous games where the stakes are high. His tricky lifestyle worries Celeste, who would prefer he had a stable job. Since Eddie loves Celeste, there's some changing to do. b&w $2.95

one-shot **Pounded** (Brian Wood & Steve Rolston; tpbk) Heavy Parker rules the punk scene as a benevolent dictator. That is, until his girlfriend goes away, and then he gets a bit weepy. What a Nancy, eh Sid? Mature readers 88pg b&w $8.95

Penny Farthing

Decoy 4 (of 4; Huddleston & Scalera + Garcia) Decoy's transformation into a dangerous red Meta is almost complete, and the city dams are buckling under the intense rain. You might think that things couldn't get any worse, but well, they can, and they do. As the deadly storm floods out of control, Bobby Luck finds himself in a fight for his life and the lives of Dolphin City inhabitants. This tale features action packed visuals and colourful writing. $2.95

The Victorian 16 (Wein + Aubin & Moussa + Chuckry) While Leviticus Doc Shumpert follows the trail of the mysterious voodoo shrine, Laszlo Gerevich recounts his last days in the 19th century. $2.95

Zendra Vol 2 *#4 (In the Blind Days;* Montiel + Buelna & Moore + Garcia) The Jekkaran invasion of Zendra finds Dr Forcilia and the humans defenceless. With Halle deep beneath the surface of the planet, the Zendrans must surrender to survive. $2.95

Sirius

Banzai Girl 2 (Jinky Coronado) Jinky, Katie J and friends escape the tentacled clutches of their captors and declare war on all invaders. Plus, a hideous snake lies beneath the floor of the new shopping centre. $2.95

new **Dogwitch** 1 (Daniel Schaffer) But that's enough about my wife. Banished deep into the evil Bonewoods for daring to practice her own brand of molotov magic, Violet Grimm continues to stretch the boundaries of accepted 21st century witchcraft. But that's enough about my wife. As tales of bad sex and voodoo spread her infamy throughout the Banewoods, Violet captures the attention of a multitude of weirdos. But that's enough about my wife. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Empty Zone: Coversations With The Dead 3 (of 5; Jason Alexander) Corinne finally comes face to face with Mr Filibaugh, the mysterious mogul who hired her as an assassin. Situated one mile above the streets of Old Pittsburgh, Fili's corporate fortress becomes the stage for a particularly unsettling confrontation. 24pg b&w $2.95

Tokyopop

Angelic Layer Vol 3 (of 7; CLAMP; graphic novel) In the distant future, the most popular sport in Japan is Angelic Layer. Contestants use fighting dolls that they hatch and raise from eggs. As the Angelic Layer tournament continues, prodigy Misaki surprises the competition with her mastery of the game. She shares a special bond with her angel, Hikaru, allowing her to mimic the moves of some of the other players she faces. Then it's all screwed when ITV Digital go bust. 192pg b&w . $9.99

Cardcaptor Sakura 33 (CLAMP) It's Valentine's Day in Tomoeda, and Sakura and her friends are busy giving chocolates to their special friends. Of course, Sakura is planning to give chocolates to her crush, Yukito, but she also uses the holiday to become closer to the grandfather she never knew she had. 48pg b&w $2.99

Cowboy Bebop Vol 1 (Yutaka Nanten; graphic novel) When Spike, Jet, Faye and Ed get together, it can only mean one thing – carnage! In keeping with the popular off-beat anime, the manga begins a series of original stories that take the action to a whole new level. What's more, Spike, Jet and Faye all end up going after the same bounty. 184pg b&w $9.99

GTO Vol 7 (Tohru Fujisawa) Meet Eikichi Onizuka, a crude and rude 22 year-old ex-biker. Onizuka finally gets his job back with the help of several friends. But his worst fears are realised when a student with superior intelligence makes an appearance. And she's a lady! Can Onizuka defeat the teacher terminator? 192pg b&w $9.99

Gundam Wing: The Last Outpost 4 (of 12; Yadate & Tomino + Tokita) The Burnett Brothers have always been close. So when older brother Odel inexplicably joins the Stardust Knights, Odin's heart is broken. Not only is the remote colony MOV-II greatly outnumbered, but its top pilot is now fighting for the enemy! 48pg b&w $2.99

Initial D Vol 4 (Shuichi Shigeno; graphic novel) Taks' reputation around Gunma Prefecture is growing, and better challengers are beginning to come out of the woodwork to face the now infamous Eight Six. One of those challengers is the top driver on the Night Kids' racing team, Shinjo, whose lust for winning borders on the psychotic. Tak's entering into some stiff competition, but he may find his strongest competitor is himself. 208pg b&w $9.99

Island Vol 6 (In-Wan Youn & Kyung-Il Yang; graphic novel) Mysterious skulls that can massacre hundreds in seconds are appearing around Cheju Island, and a ground of Japanese Interpol agents have come to take care of the matter. But when Miho finds herself the victim of an attack, the investigation becomes very personal. Is the source of the skulls' power really a new retro virus like the Interpol agents say? Or are more sinister forces at work? Miho's protector Pan must confront an old nemesis, and John puts his white magic to the test. Mature readers 176pg b&w $9.99

Kare Kano Vol 3 (Masami Tsuda; graphic novel) Yukino lives for praise an popularity, unwilling to share the spotlight with anyone. But trouble comes in the form of a new boy at school who can do no wrong. She sees him as her arch rival, while he sees her as a fake. She'll do anything to destroy him, until he tells her he loves her. Heh heh. Silly girl. 192pg b&w $9.99

Kodocha Sana's Stage Vol 4 (Miho Obana; graphic novel) Find out what happens when child star Sana Kurata tries to fix the problems of everyone around her. When Sana's mother releases her latest book, *My Daughter and I*, there is a media frenzy over who Sana' really mother actually is. As Sana searches for her roots, her life gets more and more confusing. Her former enemy Akito is sending her mixed messages, and her manager Rei is pressuring her to star in a movie she's not ready to commit to. 176pg b&w $9.99

Love Hina Vol 7 (Ken Akamatsu; graphic novel) In his enduring struggle to be accepted into the halls of Tokyo University, Keitaro Urashima takes another stab at the gruelling entrance exam. But living in a household of beautiful young nubile nymphs can get a bit distracting, especially since Keitaro has fallen in love with one of them – the fair Naru. But the path to true love never did run smooth, and all that jazz. Nice! 184pg b&w $9.99

Marmalade Boy Vol 4 (Wataru Yoshizumi; graphic novel) Just when everything finally seems to be going well for Miki and Yuu, trouble strikes again. Big Trouble. Miki's jealousy kick in when Yuu takes a special interest in a new person at school. As if that wasn't confusing enough, the new person is a gentleman. Are they just friends or something more? Miki will stop at nothing to find out the truth. 192pg b&w . $9.99

Mars Vol 6 (Fuyumi Soryo; graphic novel) Kira and Rei are definitely in love, but no-one said love was easy. When a new guy enrols in their school, he instantly develops a big crush on both Rei and Kira. To make matters worse, it turns out this mysterious strangers is from Rei's violent past. 192pg b&w ... $9.99

Miracle Girls Vol 6 (Nami Akimoto; graphic novel) Toni and Mika's investigation into the legend of twins queens continues. They begins to suspect that their new friend Emma's life is in danger. They're certain that her long-lost twin Marie is plotting to kill her so she can ascend to the throne alone. Mika persuades her family to take a trip to England so she can see the object of her affection, Chris. 192pg b&w $9.99

Parasyte Vol 12 (Hitosi Iwaaki; graphic novel) One Parasyte remains. Goto holds five Parasytes in one body, and can morph all of his limbs to deadly effect. He single-handedly killed an entire military batallion during the city hall raid. Shin has escaped from Goto twice, but only with Lefty's help. Now Lefty is gone, and Shin will have to confront Goto one last time. Mature. 192pg b&w . $12.99

Peach Girl Vol 7 (Miwa Ueda; graphic novel) Kiley and Momo decide to set up Sae with her dream date – only it turns out to be the date from hell. Kiley hires an actor to put the moves on Sae and turn into a major pervert before her very eyes. When they carry out their conniving plan, something goes drastically wrong, and Sae is put in real danger. It's up to Momo to save the day, but can she find it in her heart to rescue her worst enemy? 192pg b&w $9.99

Priest Vol 3 (Min-Woo Hyung; graphic novel) Temozarela, a fallen archangel

with plans to upset the supernatural order, has sent his strongest minions to battle Ivan Isaacs. The last corrupt preacher to battle Ivan, Jarbilong, ended up losing. 184pg b&w $9.99

Ragnarok Vol 4 (Myung Jin Lee & Richard A. Knaak) Loki, greatest of all the Assassins, returns to his guild only to find that his people have been slaughtered. His only clue point to Chaos, so Loki sets off to find and kill him. Yet, he's not the only one looking for Chaos. Skurai himself wants to hunt him down. Now Chaos, who recently discovered that he is the reincarnation of the god Blader, must fight two of the most deadly warriors in Midgard. 184pg b&w $9.99

Saint Tail Vol 7 (Megumi Tachikawa; graphic novel) By day, Meimi Haneoka is an ordinary student at St Paulina's middle school, but by night she is Saint Tail, the magical thief who steals back treasures for their rightful owners. 176pg b&w $9.99

The Skull Man Vol 4 (Kazuhiko Shimamoto & Shotaro Ishinomori) The mutants are out in force, infiltrating the bureaucratic super-structure of the modern world, infecting the populous with a transmorphic serum, worming their way into our daily lives. Only one man can stop the conspiracy – an undead superhero whose past holds the answers to understanding the scourge of the present. But when the Cobra Man strikes, Skull Man may have to call on help to beat him. 184pg b&w $9.99

Sorceror Hunters Vol 12 (Satoru Akahori & Ray Omishi; graphic novel) In the magical world of the Spooner Continent, sorcerers unjustly wield their power over humans, tyrannising villages across the land. Determined to put an end to the abuse, Big Mama has assembled a team of the Sorcerer Hunters to be a freedom fighting force for mankind. However, as Big Mama's approach to usurping power from the Sorcerers involves civility, Zaha Torte wants to resort to more radical means. 184pg b&w $12.99

Viz

The All-New Tenchi Muyo! Part 2 #1 (of 5; Hitoshi Okuda) Tenchi is forced to babysit for his aunt, bringing Baby Tenchi back into the cosmic series. No longer is Sasami the youngest character in the household. No longer is Ryo-oh-ki the most incoherent. But taking care of a kid with all those aliens and science fiction gadgets around proves to be difficult. 48pg b&w $2.95

one-shot **Anime Art Gallery: The Art of Fushigi Yugi** (Yu Watase) Collects colour illustrations of Fushigi Yugi for the first time in an English title. When best friends Miaka and Yui open an ancient Chinese book, they find themselves transported back to the Universe of the Four Gods, a parallel world strangely like ancient China. This book features the work of Yu Watase, the author of many other manga series, combining fantasy, science fiction, humour and romance. 104pg .. $22.95

Bastard!! #11 (*Empress* 1 of 4; Kazushi Hagiwara) The dark elf Arshes Nei, once the adopted daughter of Dark Schneider, steps forward. The Thunder Empress attacks Castle Metallicana, where Ninja Master Gara has become the last line of defence against the besieging armies. And as the Murasame Blade clashes against the sword of Lightning, the castle defenders are caught up in a titanic battle of, well, evil versus evil. Mature readers 64pg b&w $3.95

Bastard!! Vol 2 (Kazushi Hagiwara; tpbk) The kingdom of Metallicana is under attack by the dark forces of four evil armies sweeping the world. As orcs and giants besiege their citadel, the desperate defenders turn to a legend that a virgin's kiss may awaken Dark Schneider, an ancient evil wizard sealed within the body of 14 year-old Lucien. Mature readers 208pg b&w $14.95

Battle Angel Alita: Last Order Part 1 #2 (Yukita Kishiro) Alita awakens to discover that she is the pawn of mad scientist Desty Nova. He has super-engineered a new cyborg body for her, capable of self-upgrading and even chameleon-like colour-changing. b&w $2.95

The Big O Part 2 #4 (of 4; Hajime Yatate & Hitsohi Ariga) The origin of Schwarzwald, never revealed in the anime series, is finally told here. From the depths of below Paradigm city rises the skeleton of a Megadeus, and Roger Smith's Big O must stop its rampage. But only one man knows the truth about the terrible secrets buried in those dark catacombs – and it's a truth he'll do anything to bring to light. 48pg b&w $3.50

one-shot **The Big O** Vol 1 (Hitoshi Ariga; tpbk) In amnesia-afflicted Paradigm City, Roger Smith is secretly the pilot of the Big O, and enorous giant robot which protects the great metropolis from evil. Rodge must negotiate with criminals, and then fight of the technological warfare that threatens to destroy his hi-tech motor. 216pg b&w $15.95

one-shot **Blood: The Last Vampire 2002** (Benkyo Tamaoki; graphic novel) *See Close-Up, below.*

Ceres Celestial Legend Part 4 #1 (of 4; Yu Watase) The Mikage Organisation has trapped Suzumi in a dream state where she believes that her husband Kazuma is still alive. Will she return to reality or will she prefer to stay in her pleasant world of illusions? Also, meet Chidori Kuruma, a girl who has travelled across Japan just to find Yuhi. What could she possibly want from him? 48pg b&w $3.50

one-shot **Chicago** Vol 1 (Yumi Tamura; graphic novel) It's the middle of the 21st century and Tokyo just keeps on getting bigger. But suddenly, the city suffers one of its murderous earthquakes. The members of the Self-Defense Force Rescue Squad are attacked and murdered as they try to help. The mystery behind this brutal plot lies in the south-Shinjuku bar called Chicago. 200pg b&w $15.95

Dragon Ball Part 5 #5 (of 7; Akira Toriyama) Kuiririn and Goku have both mastered the Turtle School of Martial Arts – but Goku's physical power is much greater. As their fight wears on, Kuiririn must look to outwit his opponent. 48pg b&w $2.95

Dragon Ball Z Part 5 #10 (of 10; Akira Toriyama) At the end of his tether, and collapsing from exhaustion, the evil Freeza makes on last attempt to kill Saiyan Goku before Planet Namek explodes. 72pg b&w $2.95

Dragon Ball Z Vol 10 (Akira Toriyama; tpbk) As Freeza changes into his third and fourth forms, Gohan Kuiririn and Piccolo find themselves struggling to stay alive. 192pg b&w $12.95

Fushigi Yugi Vol 7: Castaway (Yu Watase) When best friedns Miaka and Yui open an ancient Chinese book, they find themselves transported to a parallel world. Trapped in the Universe of the Four Gods, Miaka is thrust into the role of Priestess, and must save an entire empire. 200pg b&w $15.95

Gundam: The Origin 3 (Yoshikazu Yasuhiko; graphic novel) After falling prey to a Zeon ambush, the Federation's newest ship, White Base, tries to make a daring escape from the Side 7 Colony. Unfortunately for the rookie crew, their f(l)ight is about to get much tougher. 128pg b&w $7.95

Inu Yasha Part 7 #3 (of 8; Rumiko Takahashi) In the midst of a battle with his brother Sessho-maru, Inu-Yasha is finally able to see through the Scar of the Wind and utilise the Tetsusaiga to its fullest potential. 40pg b&w $2.95

Mobile Suit Gundam 0079 Vol 7 (Kazuhisa Kondo) The beleaguered White Base has finally made it back to the Federation's subterranean headquarters at Jaburo for a round of repairs. 192pg b&w $9.95

Neon Genesis Evangelion Part 7 #6 (Yoshiyuki Sadamoto) The hitherto frightening power of the Eva has now becoming terrifying. Now that the hideous nature of mankind's "Saviour" is apparent, the battered remnants of NERV are torn by doubt. 48pg b&w $3.50

one-shot **Orochi: Blood** Volume 1 (Kazuo Umezu; graphic novel) Creepy girls' horror comic., set inside a weird gigantic mansion. 224pg b&w $16.95

Project Arms Part 1 #2 (Ryoji Minagawa) Ryo discovers that Hayato is responsible for Katsumi's kidnapping. When the two start to fight, one of Hayato's arms transforms into a mutant superweapon. 40pg b&w $3.25

Ranma ½ Part 11 #8 (of 11; Rumiko Takahashi) Setting out to get the magical teapot, Ranma, Mousse and Ryoga lose their money, and lose their map. b&w $2.95

Silent Mobius: Blood Part 11 #4 (of 5; Kia Asamiya) As half-human, half-Lucifer Hawk sisters Rally and Rosa continue their sublime battle with each other. b&w $2.95

Uzumaki Vol 3 (of 3; Junji Ito; tpbk) With their town devastated by gigantic hurricanes, the citizens of Kurozo-cho find themselves cut off from the world. Mature readers. 260pg b&w ... $16.95

Vagabond 12 (Takehiko Inoue) Musashi takes on Inshun, the successor to the Hozoin Spear technique. Their battle takes a surprising turn for Musashi as he seems to be fighting a losing battle. Mature readers 80pg b&w $4.95

INTERNATIONAL

Black Library

Warhammer Monthly 60 (various) In *Bloodquest*, Clotenand Lysander must battle each other to the death! In *Hellbrandt Grimm*, Grimm and Steinherz are hot on the trail of The Immortals. All that prevents them from claiming the bounty is the Orc army that stands in their way. In *Lone Wolves* the Xth Slavok once again require the intervention of the Space Wolf lost company. 40pg $3.50

UK NEWSSTAND

DC Thomson

The Beano 3139-3142 (weekly; various) Humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

Beano Superstars 131 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology is contained in each issue. 36pg £0.65

Classics from the Comics 78 (various) Anthology reprinting classic cartoon strips from DC Thomson's vintage kids' comics Beano and Dandy. 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action and Adventure Stories 3567-3574 (eight per month; digest; various) Featuring one self-contained comic strip per issue. Some new material. 68pg b&w £0.80

The Dandy 3171-3174 (weekly; various) Humour strips from DC Thomson's longest-running comic, starring Desperate Dan, Cuddles & Dimples, Beryl the Peril, Spotted Dick and Korky the Cat. £0.55

Football Picture Story Monthly 395-396 (fortnightly; digest; various) Contains one self-contained footie story per issue. 68pg b&w £0.80

Fun-Size Beano 123-124 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace, and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60

Fun-Size Dandy 124-125 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from The Dandy featuring Desperate Dan, and many more favourites. 68pg £0.60

Panini Comics

Action Man 78 (four-weekly; various) All-new soldier adventure yarns, plus quizzes and prizes based on the action figure. 28pg £1.50

Astonishing Spider-Man 91 (four-weekly; various; Marvel UK) Official UK outing for US Marvel comic adventures, with free posters and extras. 76pg £2.40

The Avengers United 18 (various; Marvel UK) Collecting the cream of the Avengers crop and shaping them up for a UK readership. 76pg £2.40

Doctor Who Magazine 321 (four-weekly; various) Contains celebrity interviews, feature articles and original stories based on everybody's favourite doc. 52pg £3.30

Essential X-Men 91 (four-weekly; various; Marvel UK) This issue contains material from US editions Giant Sized X-Men #1 and Uncanny X-Men #358. 76pg £2.40

Sindy 28 (various) Includes comic strips, pop features and loads of cool things to get working at, all based on the UK's alternative to Barbie. . £1.45

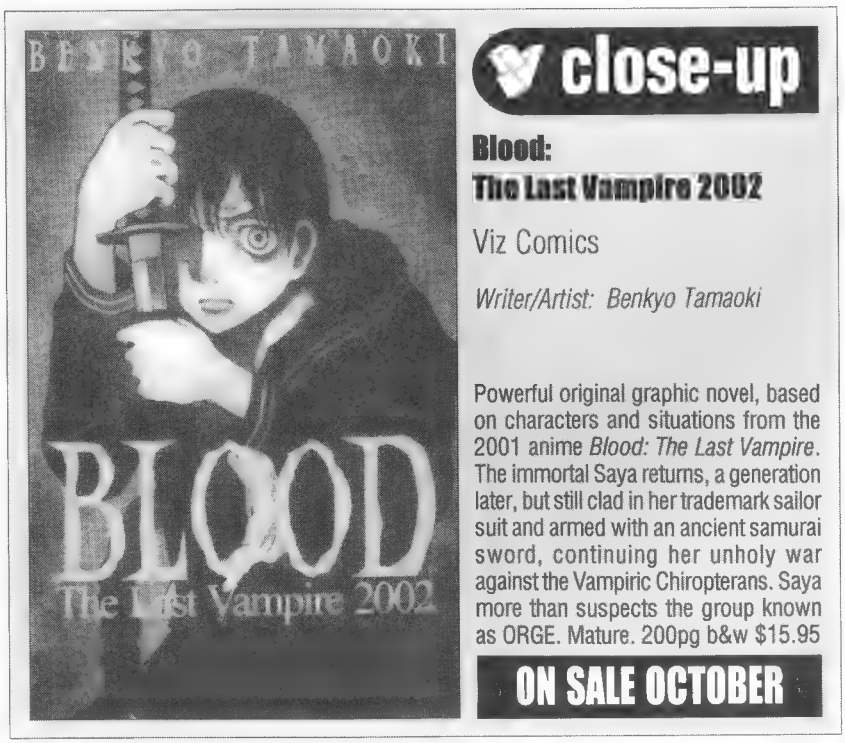
Spectacular Spider-Man 86 (eight-weekly; various) All new comic strips, puzzles and games. Plus, if you're good, a bunch of free posters and a competition. 36pg £1.75

Wolverine & Gambit 77 (four-weekly; various; Marvel UK) Compiles US Marvel's own brand of Wolverine comic strips plus magazine-style feature articles on the tortured toothy one. 76pg £2.40

Rebellion

2000 AD #1311-1315 (various) Future hitmen Sinister Dexter find themselves in trouble with the law. $3.25

Judge Dredd Megazine Vol IV #17 (various) *Badlander* continues for Judge Dredd, while Young Middenface gets banged up. The bullets fly in *The Bendatti Vendetta*, and *Durham Red* gives us more hot fang action. 100pg .. $10.99



close-up

Blood: The Last Vampire 2002

Viz Comics

Writer/Artist: Benkyo Tamaoki

Powerful original graphic novel, based on characters and situations from the 2001 anime *Blood: The Last Vampire*. The immortal Saya returns, a generation later, but still clad in her trademark sailor suit and armed with an ancient samurai sword, continuing her unholy war against the Vampiric Chiropterans. Saya more than suspects the group known as ORGE. Mature. 200pg b&w $15.95

ON SALE OCTOBER

Comment

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry. As such, the following opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Submissions are edited only for grammar, clarity and brevity.

Miller's Dark Knight 2

Comment by Darren Clarke via e-mail

SOME months ago I wrote to **CI** with a scathing comment on Frank Miller's **DK2**. I felt I was being a bit hard on him as I criticised not only the rushed feel of the book, but also the lack of story flow and characterisation. I said I wanted to wait until the series had ended and see if I still felt as cheated.

Well, I finished part three this morning, and I feel totally justified in everything I wrote. How can the same guy who wrote my all-time favourite run on **Daredevil**, as well as **Dark Knight Returns**, **Ronin** and **Sin City** be responsible for this? Are there two Frank Millers? Is this the same guy who wrote the screenplay for *Robocop 2*? Has this imposter stolen the real Miller's pens and knocked this out for a laugh?

I don't slate people this much unless I really care. And I do care about this! I care about how much hype was made of it; I care about the late shipping; I care about the extortionate price; and I care about the raised expectations of so many fans of the original.

DC set this up to be an instant classic, but in my opinion, it has failed miserably. A vast improvement would have been to include Klaus Janson (an extremely underrated benefactor of Miller's success) on inks. And as DC made it such a high profile book, and with the price and creators behind it, you would expect it to exude quality... a word I would usually associate with Miller's work.

Which brings me onto the lack of quality art within the X-books of late. Can someone tell me the name of the guy who told Igor Kordey he could draw? I'm a small press artist, and I admit I am no Jim Lee, but if there's one thing that pisses me off it's seeing artists on professional books who are blatantly crap.

Now, I can back this up with facts, not just come across with the point of view of a jealous artist. Presumably he is part of the same brains trust as the guy who still thinks **X-Treme X-Men** is a well-written book. It all started out so well, after the latest 'revision', then slowly the art teams slipped, and then the writers followed. Hopefully Chuck Austen can get Ron Garney to recapture the magic he had with **Captain America**, **Silver Surfer** and **Hulk**.

I remember a time when I was looking forward to my comics each month, because I was interested in the characters and storylines, not just praying that they weren't crap. I'm not just getting old and outgrowing comics, I just know that they are capable of so much more. And with Marvel and DC producing such low quality writing and art, how are the people at the bottom of the ladder supposed to feel inspired?

When I first started writing and drawing my own stories, I had such a rich tapestry of comics to explore, pilfer and be exposed to.

But today, I don't envy young artists if the quality they see is what we are being fed of late.

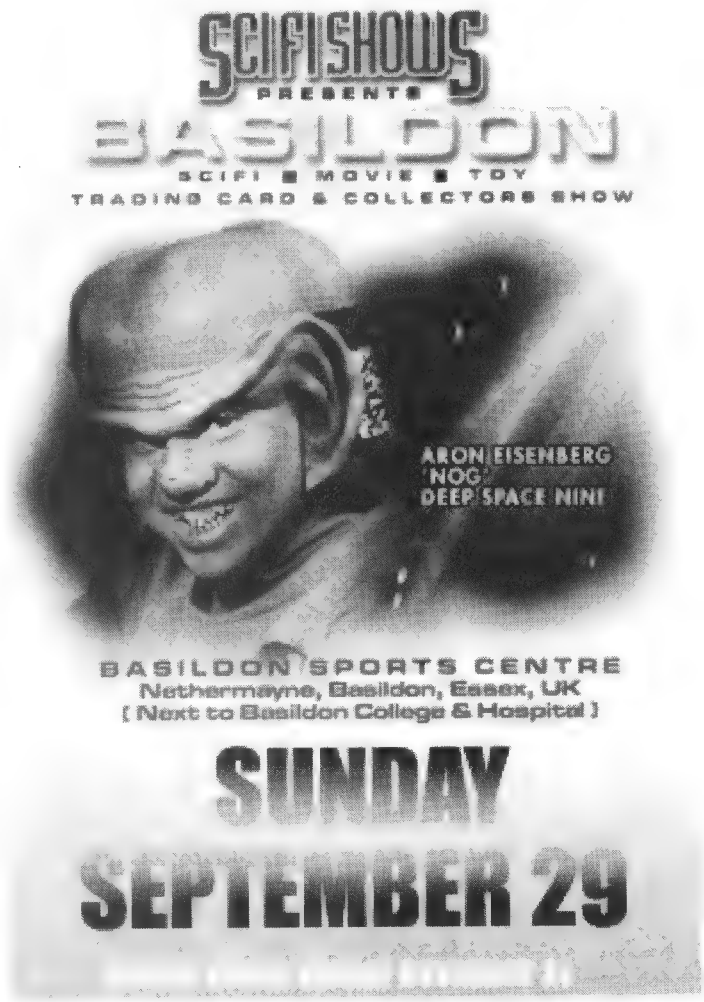
Marvel Star Wars: An overview

Comment by Stephen Hall via e-mail

BEGINNING a long-overdue trade paperback collection of Marvel's **Star Wars** series, Dark Horse's first volume reprints issues one to 20.

The initial six-part adaptation of the original movie is one of Marvel's best selling and most-reprinted comics ever. It remains one of the few great movie adaptations, although the creators could hardly have gone wrong with this particular story. The artwork is slightly uneven, as Howard Chaykin drew the first issue on his own, and was then joined by inker Steve Leialoha for issues two to five. And then Rick Hoberg and Bill Wray inked the final chapter. Nevertheless, it is still a great read, with Roy Thomas (who brought the property to Marvel at the request of George Lucas) providing a cracking script.

Thomas's next move was perhaps a strange one, as he was responsible for producing the first ever sequel to *Star Wars* anywhere. Issues seven to 10 are a blatant Seven Samurai/Magnificent Seven homage, spotlighting Han Solo and Chewbacca. This was perhaps fitting as the Western genre and the films of Akira Kurosawa were major influences on Lucas in creating *Star Wars*. After initially approving the



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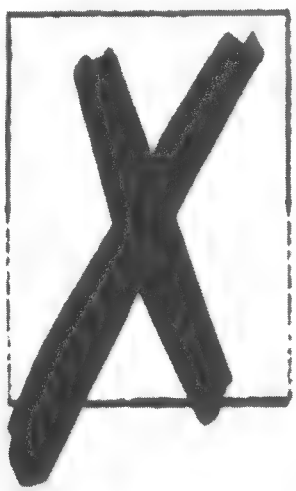

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idea, Lucas was dismayed to see that the storyline was extremely close to The Magnificent Seven, and included a six-foot, green, carnivorous rabbit creature called Jaxxon (Thomas claimed he was inspired by a Porky Pig-like character from the film's Cantina sequence). Actually, Jaxxon is pretty funny, and less ludicrous than the delusional old knight called Don-Wan Kihotay (groan!).

Issue 10 saw a disenchanted Thomas and Chaykin leave to make way for the new team of Archie Goodwin and Carmine Infantino. The late Goodwin had much more affinity with the Star Wars universe than Thomas, and has perhaps not been fully recognised for his contributions to the saga (he also wrote for the Star Wars newspaper strip). Issues 11-15 reunited Han and Chewie with Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia and the droids in a pirate-themed tale set on a water-world. A Silver Age great, Infantino's dynamic art did not capture the actors' likenesses, but his bold action sequences and hardware designs are a joy.

Issue 16 is an interesting interlude, drawn by Walt Simonson and Bob Wiacek, and featuring the droid-hating bounty hunter Valance.

Issue 17, written by Goodwin from a plot by Chris Claremont, is a rare look at Luke's days on Tatooine prior to the events of *A New Hope*. This volume concludes with the first half of the Wheel Saga, the first part of which was presciently titled "The Empire Strikes", in which the heroes find themselves on a giant space station devoted to gambling, while trying to evade Imperial troops.

All in all, these tales hold up very well. Dark Horse's back cover blurb and introduction play up the kitschy elements of the series, but while these stories are from the wacky world of '70s Marvel, they are Star Wars through and through. Some of the costumes and dialogue verge on the camp, but any Star Wars fan discovering these adventures for the first time will not be disappointed.

Dark Horse's presentation is excellent, although a new piece of cover art might have been nice!

Universes ablaze

Comment by J.C. Lebourdais via e-mail

PEOPLE have dubbed Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* "the best movie ever made about a superhero", praying and hoping that it would help bridge the gap between comics and cinema and bring a new audience into the direct market. Well, if you really think about it, you'll realise that it might create more problems than it would solve.

Why? Because, to make it all stand together, Marvel had to operate deep changes within its core group of titles, "to make it more like in the movies". Hence the Ultimate line was born, along with the huge box-office success of *X-Men* and – to a lesser extent – *Blade*. And indeed these titles are the ones that sell.

So now we have two parallel Marvel universes standing face to face. Along with the same batch of characters, same names but so very different. And with movie projects flourishing by the truckload, some of them as high-profile as *Hulk* or *Daredevil*, the crack is bound to widen more and more.

How do Mr Q and Co expect to reconcile hardcore comics fans favouring "classic" original characters that they've known so well for years, and newcomers to whom the Ultimates are destined? To me it looks a lot like the old Earth One/Earth Two situation with the only possible ending a "crisis on infinite Marvel heroes", eventually merging everything to make it all consistent without alienating one group over the other. That and maintaining character likeness for licensing purposes goes without saying.

So now you can imagine the titanic size of DC execs' headache.

What if I was an ordinary bystander who does not read comics and just happens to watch TV and go to the movies every once in a while? Let's just pretend for a few minutes.

I'm a huge Batman fan and I went to see the four big-screen instalments (how courageous I am!). I saw this character mutate from a tormented armoured midget (the Tim Burton vision, curse you Tim!) to a tawdry but lazy middle-aged *ER* reject cracking Bond-level one-liners. Hard to think it's the same character. And lucky I'm not old enough to remember Adam West (reruns, anyone?). Actually, I'd take Romero over Nicholson every time; and Gorshin over Carrey just as much. Matter of taste, I guess.

OK, now let's skip to DC's flagship #2, namely Superman. Is *Smallville* consistent with *Lois & Clark*? You think so? Hey, young bald Lex, meet Mr hairy tycoon Luthor. And try to match this Clark Kent's trendy bare-chested youth with the '80s *Superboy* show (sure, I admit it was silly but as much fun to watch as a '50s Al Plastino/Stan Kaye comic).

Who wants to explain to the average American couch potato what Crisis and Zero Hour mean?

I could go on like this forever. The Flash appearing in *Justice League Animated* has nothing in common with John Wesley Shipp's portrayal of a while back – which is nowhere to be found in comics, anyway. And I dare not even think about Sandra Bullock as Wonder Woman, not to soil my tender teen dreams of Lynda Carter.

Wait till I want to actually enter a comicbook store and get into the printed DC universe now. First I have to sort between the animated DC and the "regular",

which obviously do not aim at the same audience. But without a clear differentiation on the imprint, cover logo or design (à la Star Comics of old).

A mother wanting to give her child a taste of what they saw on screen would be undeniably lost in front of those endless crossovers and nth split-second revamps and retcons (ah, Superman Blue! Ah, Hawkman! Ah, Hypertime!). And the kid definitely lost to the cause. Forever. Mr Nintendo says "Thank you, DC".

Retaining copyrights and trademarks in such deep quicksand must be a massive dilemma at Warner. Are we going to see an Ultimate DC universe soon? Would be a logical step in some sort of direction. Or maybe they don't want to sell comics, after all?

Well, Mr. Levitz, you could say "Shazam!" out loud, but I'm afraid it won't suffice.

Small pressers unite

Comment by Chris Atkins via e-mail

ANDREW Lewis derserves a pat on the back for his efforts in *Reviews* to emphasize the wealth and diversity of UK small press.

Although he seemed somewhat unimpressed with my own efforts, he was spot on with the majority of critiques (in my opinion, having read the comics reviewed) and gave much-appreciated exposure. Also a wise editorial move, it gives **CI** readers access to homegrown stuff as an antidote to the plethora of US product.

Let's face it, what else is there in the UK, other than the small press? **2000 AD**, of course. What else? Sod all, that's what!

Society has changed since I was a kid, so I understand to a certain extent why British comics have almost died out, but surely most **CI** readers would initially support a new, original Brit-strip monthly? (Have I just coined a new term?) With 40,000-plus **CI** readers (that's about right isn't it?) that seems a huge potential audience.

It's not all down to finance. There is a creative vacuum in this country, not among actual artists and writers, but among the money men. Where are the risk takers? It seems that in all areas of business, and some arts and entertainment, the most adhered to strategy is duplication of ideas, follow the market leader. Something new? Forget it, not tried and tested.

I'm not contradicting myself by looking across the Atlantic for fresh ideas and risk-taking. My reference to US comics may seem negative, but it's not. It's merely to illustrate my frustration with comics in the UK. Americans now produce the world's best TV, they continue to produce sci-fi shows, dominate the film industry and don't take any shit from anyone.

Of course, the Yanks have all the crappy soaps, boy bands and the like, but the reason they excel is a simple one; they take risks. There are exceptions. Paul Grist is an inspiration, though, as happy as I am for an original talent to be recognised, I wish a British publisher would have had the balls to get behind **Jack Staff**.

But there is hope. Barry Renshaw, editor of **Fusion**, has organised pub meets to bring together small pressers and plans a mini-con where he hopes to get kids interested in comics. Shane Chebsey's Smallzone is a distribution service for indie comics with a cool website.

There's a massive pool of talent out there and with a little enthusiasm, dosh, experience – something you have bucket loads of, Dez – creativity and the willingness to take chances, that can reach a much wider audience.

The return of Neil Gaiman

Comment by Jae Leitch via e-mail

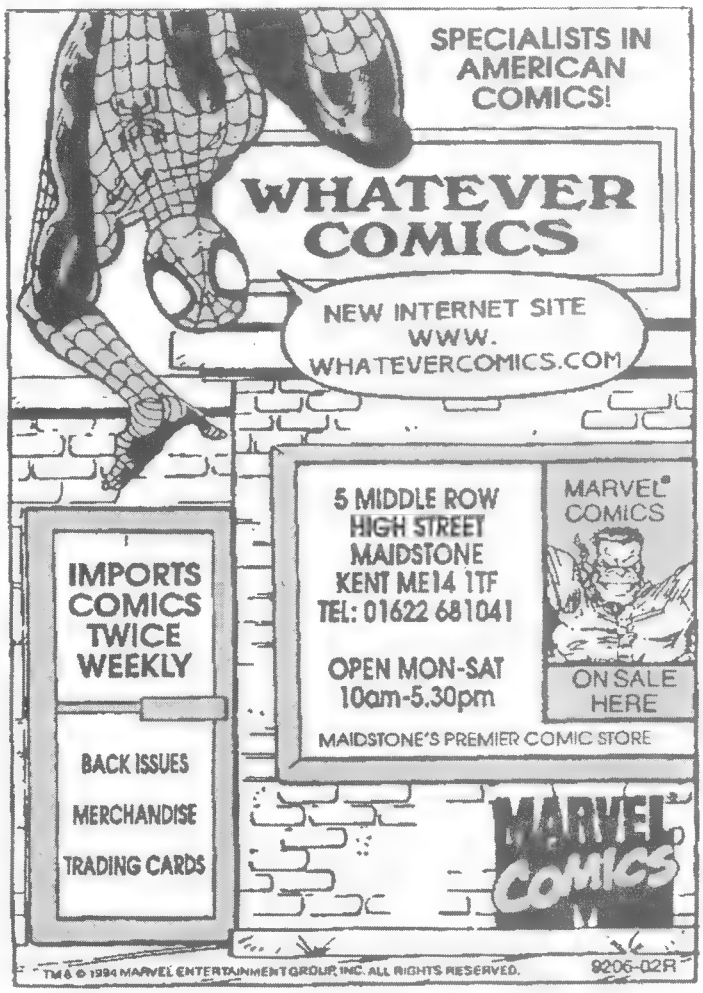
NEIL Gaiman is returning to comics with two projects. The first, **Endless Nights**, is a Vertigo project utilising the **Sandman** characters on which his reputation is based.

Perhaps more surprisingly the other project, **1602**, will be released by Marvel. Speaking in Edinburgh at the launch of his new dark fantasy novel, **Coraline**, Gaiman refused to be drawn on **1602**, saying only that it presented a chance to work with characters created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby.

Speaking of his decision to leave comics, Gaiman said that he felt he'd achieved everything there was to achieve – and in reference to the Hugo he shared with Charles Vess, some things he wasn't supposed to achieve – and wanted to try his hand at other things. Having now penned the bestseller **American Gods** and completed **Coraline**, which was 10 years in the writing, he felt it was a good time to return.

Fielding a question from the floor as to why he'd managed to cross the barrier and become a novelist, as opposed to a writer of comics, when his peers such as Alan Moore and Grant Morrison had not, Gaiman put his transition down to desire. "Alan [Moore] sees comics as the one true medium," he noted, while pointing out that Moore had had a novel published, and Morrison's short stories generally appear in anthologies.

Questioned on his cult status, Gaiman needed only to indicate to the packed auditorium, proof that he has transcended cult and moved into the higher echelons of dark fantasy writers.



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Frank Miller's JESUS!

Visual Comment by Jon Edwards, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

BACK in **CI** #123 (August, 2000) you ran a news item about Frank Miller prepping up a new Dark Horse Maverick series entitled **Jesus!** for publication in 2002 ("The toughest job I've ever given myself.").

As his **Sin City** work has had a seminal and lasting effect on his style, I thought **CI** readers – after two years of eager anticipation – would like to see how Miller on JC could possibly look...

Dark Knight writer-artist quits Sin City for Jesus!

DARK Horse has announced that Frank Miller is to become the latest in a long line of creators to translate the life of Jesus Christ into comics.

The project will not see print until 2002 but the company – which publishes all of Miller's creator-owned projects – explained that it is making the announcement now in an effort to quell industry speculation that Miller's current work on his forthcoming sequel to **Batman: The Dark Knight Returns** signalled an end to his relationship with Dark Horse Comics.

Jesus! is to be published under Dark Horse's Maverick imprint. In it, the **Sin City** writer/artist will chronicle the life of Christ, basing his version on historical evidence.

"Putting together **300** taught me several lessons," said Miller. "One was that there's no point in being scared of a really great story. Another was that if one delves deep into research, and gives it the time it demands, history becomes a treasure trove.

"As I write and draw **Batman: The Dark Knight Strikes Again**, I'm stacking up a mountain of books in preparation for **Jesus!**, almost certainly the toughest job I've ever given myself," he continued. "But the toughest ones are always the most fun."

Senior Maverick editor Diana Schutz added, "I've actually already begun reading some of the texts Frank has recommended, and it's remarkable how this story, familiar to people the world over, can take on a brand new light – or even several – depending on who's doing the telling."

ABOVE: The Road to Courage, Dragon Dream's 1981 hardcover collection; art by Frank Hampson.

The Eagle connection

Much as Miller's recounting of the Spartan army's stand at the Battle of Thermopalyae in his **300** seemed to have been inspired in part by Frank Bellamy's *Heros the Spartan*, his latest project echoes another series that ran in **The Eagle** in the 1960s.

The Road to Courage was written by Marcus Morris with art by Frank Hampson. The **Eagle** co-founders' story of the life of Christ, it ran 56 issues from #11/10 to #12/14.

Hampson's first major work after *Dan Dare*, it was also his last because of disagreements with his publisher.

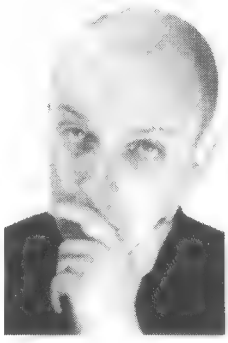
gun reading some of the tex
Frank has recommended, and it's
remarkable how this story, familiar
to people the world over, can take
on a brand new light – or even several
– depending on who's doing the
telling." //

JESUS CHRIST!
MY NAME'S CHRIST - JESUS CHRIST - I'M THE SON OF GOD.
THE BABE OVER THERE GOES BY THE HANDLE OF MARY MAGDALEN -
SHE WAS A HOOKER FROM BETHLEHEM'S LOWER EAST SIDE - THAT IS, TIL SHE HITCHED UP WITH ME.
HEY, I GOT NOTHIN' 'GAINST WHORES - IT'S EASY MONEY AN' A GIRL'S GOTTA EAT . . .
BUT MARY - SHE'S A CLASS ACT . . .
SHE DESERVES BETTER'N SATISFYIN' OVER-SEXED SAMARITANS AN' RANDY ROMANS IN SLEAZY AUDITORIUMS . . .
AN' I'M IN LOVE WITH HER, DAMN IT!
WOAH! HOW'S IT HANGIN', DUDE?

SCRIPT & ART: JON EDWARDS

THE GUY'S NAME IS JUDAS - WE GO WAY BACK.
I'D TRUST HIM WITH MY LIFE.
HOWDY, JUDE - WHAT BRINGS YOU OVER THIS SIDE O'TOWN? AIN'T SEEN YOU OR THE BOYS FOR QUITE SOME TIME.
WELL, BIG GUY, IT'S LIKE THIS - ME AN' THE DISCIPLES WERE GONNA GO CLUBBIN' TONIGHT 'ROUND CAESAR'S PLACE . . .
TROUBLE IS, JEEZ, I'M ALL OUTTA DOUGH, SO I WUZ WONDERIN' COULD YA LEND ME FORTY GOLD PIECES? I'LL PAY YA BACK NEXT WEEK.
HEY JUDE, WHAT D'YA THINK I AM? MADE OF MOOLAH?!
AW, C'MON, BIG GUY - YOU'RE THE SON O' GOD, FER CHRISSAKES! WORK SOME OF THAT MIRACLE STUFF WE SEEN YOU DO! MAKE THE MONEY RAIN DOWN FROM THE CEILIN', OR SOMETHIN'!
SORRY, MAN I'M THE SAVIOR OF MANKIND, NOT A CASH MACHINE.
PAH! THANKS A BUNCH, PAL! I ALWAYS KNEW I COULD RELY ON A FRIEND!
JUDAS - HE'S A DAMN NICE GUY . . .
NICE, BUT COMPLICATED.

Grant Morrison on Zenith



Beyond 2000 by David Bishop

Rants and raves from Egmont's ex-Tharg

THIS column is a break from the usual opinionated ramblings, in celebration of **Comics International**'s 150th issue. I've been researching and writing a history of **2000 AD** comic, serialised in the **Judge Dredd Megazine**. The only problem is I can't fit everything into the articles from interviews with dozens of creators and editorial staff, for reasons of space or relevance. So, instead of the usual rantings and ravings, this column features extracts from an interview I did with Grant Morrison.

He wrote more than a dozen one-off tales for **2000 AD** during 1986, honing his skills. Morrison says he is proud of his work on these early stories. "I remember thinking I'd never be able to come up with one, let alone several short form twist-ending stories. As someone who liked to make up epic adventures with thousands of characters, it just wasn't my forte. When I cracked the structure, it became great fun. I used to write up six or seven plots, send them in and have two accepted. I worked very hard to get the format right. I trained myself to think in a kind of Douglas Adams mode, which worked very well for *Future Shocks*." Morrison says he later discovered some writers solved the same problem by borrowing ideas from collections of science fiction short stories.

Morrison went on to co-create *Zenith*, **2000 AD**'s first superhero series. He recalls drawing a lot of inspiration from artist Brendan McCarthy, who helped design the series and its characters. "Brendan was important in changing my thinking about everything at that time. His work was so unique, so personal and inspirational. Brendan has more good ideas on three pages of his sketchbook than most people have in a lifetime. I was completely blown away and converted utterly to the McCarthy method – telling the truth on to the page and let your psyche hang out."

Zenith was created in the shadow of **Watchmen** and **The Dark Knight Returns**, but Morrison was determined to give his series a lighter touch. "Obviously those two books were – and sadly still are – considered the pinnacle of the form, but I must admit I turned very rapidly away from them. **Dark Knight** is a brilliant piece of Reagan-era fiction and **Watchmen** is very, very clever in its architecture.

"But both books felt very pompous and concept album-y to me as a young man in the '80s. I wanted to do something a little less self-conscious perhaps, or to align myself with a different current of thinking. I was more impressed with Brendan's imaginative approach than I was with Frank Miller or Alan Moore. Then when **Deadline** started up, I found I had a lot more in common with Jamie Hewlett, Philip Bond and those guys. My generation had finally arrived. I think *Zenith* can be seen as a precursor of the early '90s comics."

Although *Zenith* was full of contemporary references when it began in 1987, Morrison recalls deliberately avoiding using then-prevalent devices like caption boxes and internal monologues so the strip might outlast its era. "Fifteen years on, I think it does," he says. "The storytelling style and cynical sense of humour were techniques refined to perfection by Warren Ellis and Mark Millar. If only for that reason, *Zenith* has stood the test of time better than some of its contemporaries. *Zenith* is currently much more influential than **Watchmen** or **Dark Knight**."

*Together with his **Invisibles** partner-to-be Steve Yeowell, Morrison ocassionally revives his* Zenith *concept for special editions of **2000 AD**. Which is fortunate because, outside of tracking down old issues, there's no other way to see the character. Titan Books recently printed a collection of the strip, but the copies are currently gathering dust in a warehouse because of legal disputes over the actual ownership of the property.*

The **2000 AD** strip helped pioneer the idea of superheroes as celebrities, a recurrent theme in comics ever since. Morrison believes this concept is now crossing over into the mainstream. "The superhero figure was a socially-aware vigilante in the '30s, a soldier and a cop in the '40s and '50s, a Kennedy pioneer or a camp icon in the '60s, a brutal self-made agent of order against chaos in the '80s. It's no big surprise that the superhero in the '90s became a projection of global celebrity," he says. "I find it a bit naff, actually. I'd like to get back to secret identities, and heroes who do good and ask for no reward."

> "I remember thinking I'd never be able to come up with one, let alone several short form twist-ending stories." ...Grant Morrison on writing *Future Shocks*

Does Morrison see echoes from the *Zenith* stories in New Labour's obsession with spin and pop culture? "Oh, it's all there. Bland, ugly middle class bastards professing an interest in style and pop as if they've ever known what it was. The love of the beautiful lie over the ugly truth. The drooling veneration of celebrity – any celebrity, all celebrity. Surveillance culture disguised as family values. Style over substance. Dennis Potter replaced by Janet Street-Porter. Manufactured pop stars and Page 3 girls."

He does not rule out returning to *Zenith* in the future. "I do like the idea that he's a character who ages alongside me in his own little world. Every time he appears now, it's more and more cynical," he concluded.

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

The mild-mannered creator/writer of the Internet's original comics industry rumour and news column has outraged many a publisher and survived more than one change of website. But, despite several attempts to stop it, the Squiddy Award-winning gutterpress site continues to thrive, with over 20,000 hits a week at its new home of www.comicbookresources.com

From his unique vantage point, Rich often scoops the industry newshounds with his stories. Here are the highlights from this month's Gutter...

Busiek leaves The Avengers over Ultimates

On the *Avengers Comic Board*, Kurt Busiek revealed one of the main reasons why he left The Avengers:

"I don't have any real complaints about the book itself, but I knew that if they did an **Ultimate Avengers** it'd trigger exactly the kind of 'Which one is better?' 'Which one sucks?' argument, and that an **Ultimate Avengers** book would have that whole 'We're not boring and stodgy like the old versions of the characters' aspect as part of its promotional thrust. And I didn't want to have anything to do with that."

"And sadly, calling it **Ultimates** instead of **Ultimate Avengers** didn't change that a bit. It's entirely possible for someone to come along and be cool on **The Avengers** after **Ultimates** is launched. It happened on both **X-Men** and **Spider-Man**, after all. So I think Geoff Johns has a fine shot. But whoever was on the books when the Ultimate version happens would be recast as 'the old guard,' as the avatar of what has to be discarded to make the new stuff new and fresh. And that's not a bullseye I particularly want to stand on, thanks."

"If I'd had a ton of stuff I still wanted to do with **The Avengers**, I might've thought more seriously about making a fight out of it, but as I said at the time, I'd accomplished what I'd set out to accomplish on the book. And I don't much like the idea of being on a book that's being treated as a loser by its own publisher, implicitly or explicitly, as part of selling something new."

"Don't take this as sour grapes – I have no problem, in theory, with the Ultimate program. I like Mark Millar. I like Joe Quesada. We get along just fine. I don't know that I've ever met Bill Jemas, but I'm sure he's a swell guy too. And I'd have no problem writing a MAX book, or some of the new, glossy, big-budget movie approach to the Marvel characters (I've been talking with Tom Brevoort about one or two ideas on that score, even). But being 'the old guy' on a book that's getting the Ultimate treatment is like dressing up in a geek costume and hanging a Kick Me sign on your back. There's no way to do it well. Better to let someone who can be the new guy come in, and then go do something that can be new yourself..."

Love and comics

Lisa Marie Presley and Nicolas Cage have just got married. Last week Cage put his expensive comics collection up for sale. You can just see the pre-marriage conversation they had...

"But Lisa Marie... I named myself after this one..."

RIP

"Okay, okay, I'll sell them..."

Panini to publish DC down south?

More news about the fight over the DC Comics line in Brazil. The main rumour is currently that Panini, who used to be part of Marvel and still the main republisher of Marvel Comics abroad, for which they received a very lucrative deal for when the company was being reorganized, is in the hot seat. And that the word is that Panini have everything ready to start marketing the line for September. But an article at *Blue Bus* (translated) reveals that a number of companies are up for the rights, including Panini.

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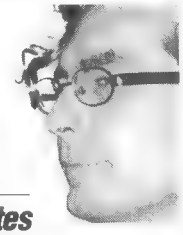
Networks



Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and the CI team of Netmites

Net sightings

Millar in The Gutters

OBVIOUSLY trying to put our Rich out of a job this month, Mark Millar decided to reveal many rumours and gossip he's been privy to over the years in his The Column on Comic Book Resources. *Here are some of his stories on projects that never made it to the printed page:*

Did you know, back when I was in my late teens and Todd McFarlane was the Spider-Man dude, that the Image founders initially pitched DC Comics, months prior to forming the Image label? I only just heard this recently and was amazed to discover that, post-Marvel, Jim and Todd had their eyes on Batman, Rob Liefeld was itching to write and draw the Teen Titans and the other Image guys wanted a crack at Superman, Wonder Woman and all those other household names at the Distinguished Competition. In fact, if you look at the first issue of **Youngblood**, you can identify analogues of pretty much the entire Teen Titans crew right down to its red-headed archer.

DC turning them down, of course, was clearly the best thing that ever happened to these comics zillionaires or poor Todd might be working-up his Red Tornado revamp even as we speak.

...Not a huge surprise to many, but the next story may be: According to Jim Shooter, DC President Sol Harrison approached him in the mid-'80s when the sales on DC core titles were only twice what they are at the moment. Apparently, the idea was that Marvel (which was enjoying some critical and commercial success under Big Jim) would license the characters for a couple of years to revitalize them before they were taken back into the DC fold. I know a number of possibilities were being considered at the time (including a revamp of Superman by Howard Chaykin, Batman by Frank Miller and Wonder Woman by Steve Gerber) but none ever came to pass.

Interestingly, some of the talent mooted in the Marvel licensing deal actually made it to the printed page in the form of Byrne's Superman, Perez's Wonder Woman and, I'm told, Miller's **Dark Knight Returns**.

Alan Moore has more than a few unpublished pitches, but try these that Mark revealed: He had a couple of Superman projects which never appeared, one of which was a graphic novel called **Superman Burns in Hell** and the other being a new, monthly team-up title **Superman Plus...** (insert childhood favourite here, folks). Both projects were nixed by Byrne's incoming Superman revamp, but Moore was offered the chance to work with Byrne on the team-up title providing he stuck to Byrne's plots. Moore's brilliant reply was that he'd be happy to... providing Byrne inked Moore's pencils.

Also missing in action is a Batman project Denny O'Neil wrote for Neal Adams, a Spider-Man series Grant Morrison wrote for Klaus Janson, a 2099 crossover Grant and I pitched as a means of re-sparking interest in what was a fading 2099 Marvel universe and, of course, the vaguely legendary pitch for the Superman books Morrison, Peyer, Waid and myself were invited to pitch back in 1999.

Millar has also covered, in some detail, exactly what your favorite comics creator used to do before working on comics for a living, and a whole host of otherwise extremely libellous rumours, had he named names. Networks *is particularly curious about who exactly the three*

Internet comic, e-zine and website reviews

COMIC BOOK RELEASES LIST *www.comiclist.com*

An ambitious site listing past, present and future comic releases. But it doesn't stop there, having increased its scope to include cancelled titles, comic-related games, books and magazines as well as a news section and some top-notch links. Recommended. (CEB) **7**

IRON MAN *www.geocities.com/Area51/Chamber/2004/home.html*

A relatively in-depth site offering pictures, profiles, fanfic and links. Easy to navigate and pleasing enough on the eye, it seems to lack a little something... maybe a section which focuses on why old shellhead is one of Marvel's greats? (CEB) **7**

SIR IAN McKELLEN OFFICIAL HOMEPAGE *www.mckellen.com*

Notable to us folk as filmdom's Magneto and Gandalf, McKellen's site is polished and extensive. *X2* features heavily on the message board, where McKellen himself answers questions. And of course there's info on the Lord of the Rings trilogy. A fine example of how the Net can be used to dispose of old barriers between admirer and artist. (CEB) **8**

SUPERHERO YELLOW PAGES *www.geocities.com/the_bradley_2000*

What in theory is a fantastic idea – a listing (including profiles) of superheroes and villains – falls flat due to a lack of continuing effort into this project. With only six entries, this once-promising site needs some serious elbow grease. (CEB) **2**

Catch up on recently printed news, reviews and events at

transsexual creators and two full-time Satanists working in the mainstream are, but then maybe we're just a bit kinky like that. Check out the full column at Comicbookresources.com

Chaos!: over and out!!

ONE of the longest running independent comics publishers, Chaos! declared Chapter 7 liquidation on Friday 16th August. Chaos! was best known for its Evil Ernie and Lady Death characters, and is credited with kicking off the bad girl craze of the mid '90s, but also ventured into licensing, with its WWF comics plus movie & music properties. Unfortunately sales had been going downhill since the end of last year, and despite the company suffering slumps in the past, it was unable to recover this time, deciding to throw in the towel and shut up shop.

Chapter 7 involves straight bankruptcy and liquidation of assets in this case to pay creditors including the IRS, Hi-Fi Coloring and Glass House Graphics, the South American agency which had been supplying most of Chaos's artists, including Ivan Reis and Joe Bennet.

Both Hi-Fi and Glass House had seen this coming, and in fact Hi-Fi stopped working for Chaos! in February. Hi-Fi's Brian Miller told the following to Comicbook Resources*:* I am really disappointed with Chaos! Comics. They kept using people right up until the end, saying everything was going to get better. In any business, communication is the biggest key to success. I clued in early on when they dodged questions about late payments that all was not well in the world of Chaos! It is a real shame that they didn't handle themselves better. I think a lot of hard working innocent individuals and companies will end up paying the price for what essentially boils down to poor management and non-existent communication between Chaos! Comics and its vendors.

Glass House head David Campiti is also extremely angry about the situation, and believes that Chaos! owner Brian Pulido deliberately kept the likelihood of bankruptcy from him, leaving Glass House artists owed over $38,000. Considering that many of them live in poor countries, in some cases this has left the artists destitute.

In a chat with our own Rich Johnston, Campiti said: Quite a while back, Brian fell behind, and we had a long talk. I told him every company that we let fall $38,000 or so behind has burned us. We couldn't afford to let him do what Eclipse, Continuity and others have done to us. He replied, 'I'm good to my word. You will not get burned. You have my word on this'.

Campiti said, If we'd known about the situation, we would have accepted ownership of his characters and some reprint rights, then he could have covered 100% of his debt to us without actually paying us a dime and Glass House could have generated money from these to pay everyone.

So why did Chaos! go under? Campiti had some answers to that, citing three failed launches: First was their WWF licenses, shot into the direct market only, instead of working backwards and locking in smart distribution first. That was the ideal project to go out-format – do **The Rock** say, Treasury-sized with photo covers, pull-out poster and interview feature as well as comics, and sell in the stadiums to a captive audience. The direct edition of that would've been almost an afterthought.

Second was their aborted superhero line. They developed several titles, one drawn by Ivan Reis that died in the water. I think only one issue of one title came out, and art for the next couple of issues is on a shelf somewhere.

Third was their Black Book line. They at least had the Chaos! logos, but were basically black and white books on nice paper. None of those worked. Part of the problem I see with Chaos! is, no matter how good the idea – conceptually, financially, or whatever – if the idea didn't originate from Brian, it didn't get used.

So, all of Chaos's characters will be on the auction block very soon, with Avatar widely tipped to pick up the properties. Where Pulido ends up next is anyone's guess, but this sad end to the company appears to have left a sour taste in everyone's mouth.

Reviews team: Chris Bunting (CEB), Tom McSween (TM) and Chris Rice (CR)

CHOPPING BLOCK *www.choppingblock.org*

Before I start this review, I do have to point out that this site is certainly not for everyone, and those of a squeamish nature will want want to stop reading right here. Okay, now we've got rid of the wimps, *Chopping Block* is a one panel gag strip featuring the adventures of Butch, a Jason Voorhees-alike hockey-masked serial-killer, and really has absolutely no right to be quite as funny as it has been, every day for the last two years or so. The art is extremely good and unusual (kind of a spray paint woodcut effect) and there are features about the making of the strip on the site, along with a full archive of every cartoon. Cutting edge humour (and no, I can't believe I made that pun either). (CR) **7**

SCARYGOROUND *www.bobbins.org*

I only looked at this site because my ex used to write a fanzine called **Bobbins**, and was curious if there was any connection. What I found was a fairly funny strip about a group of early 20s friends, which starts off pretty poor. However, creator John Allison has discovered a lovely computer generated style, similar to Woodrow Phoenix's stuff and the last year or so of the strip, including the new spin-off, ScaryGoRound is ace, in a very silly way. If you fancy a bit of a giggle, this is well worth a look. (CR) **7**

the official CI website: www.comicsinternational.com

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

continued from previous page...

StormWatch: One of spiked Tibet titles

Remember those DC storylines concerning Tibet rumoured to be pulled over AOL Time Warner's expansion into China? I hear that one of them was **StormWatch**. The planned second arc by Micah Wright and Whilce Portacio was meant to have involved Tibet. When a DC executive heard this plan, the story was spiked and quickly replaced with a crowd-pleasing Authority guest-star. However this may not reflect DC policy overall, rather the actions of one employee.

Vertigo to restrict projects?

I hear the word that, on the brink of their tenth anniversary, Vertigo editors have been given a quiet word that soon the doors will be closed to approving new projects, or at the very least severely restricted. So anything the they want to get approved, they should hurry up. Vertigo are also currently looking for a project for Eduardo Risso to work on while he waits for **100 Bullets** scripts.

New Thunder Agents to be published

While DC has been promoting the upcoming **Thunder Agents Archives** they now have the rights to print, I understand that **Thunder Agents** a new ongoing series is in production, and will see the team tackling menaces with the attitude more commonly associated with **The Authority**. However I understand the book will not attempt to reach the political and satirical levels that **The Authority** tried to occupy.

Today Texas, tomorrow the world?

WizardWorld's future plans to end the dominance of the San Diego ComicCon may be as follows: Increase the amount of smaller shows over different regions of the USA, making conventions more frequent and accessible so as to make San Diego less special. Bring more entertainment based programming to all these shows. Attendance by the likes of Ben Affleck and Arnold Schwarzenegger are morale boosters for convention goers. Set up a West Coast beach head for inland manoeuvres. Remove the idea of a convention season, by throwing these shows all across the calendar rather than the summer months. *Newsarama.com* reported WizardWorld Texas as taking place in the autumn. A southern Californian WizardWorld would take place in the winter.

Dark Horse to reprint Conan?

At San Diego, Dark Horse staffers told one or two people that they'd licensed the rights to the old Barry Smith **Conan** material that Marvel initially published. Slightly ironic, since Windsor-Smith has sworn off from working with Dark Horse after the **Storyteller** project aborted. Talking of which, despite previous assurances that **Storyteller** would be released from Fantagraphics in early 2003, it appears that Windsor-Smith has informed them that he needs at least another year to prepare the material.

All our collective memories at WildStorm

I hear WildStorm is also in the process of looking at the IPC comic book properties that AOL Time Warner acquired fairly recently. Lots of British Fifties and Sixties comic book icons, that the likes of Paul Grist and Alan Moore go all doolally over. A possible way to keep Alan Moore happy?

Colourists get a little uppity

Apparently there's been a small clash between Marvel execs and Marvel's colourists – again. This time it's down to guidelines drawn up by the production department, that apparently fail to account for variety of snazzy effects that modern colourists like Richard Isanove, Jose Villarrubia, Paul Mounts, Avalon and Liquid use and most editors now expect. The colourists have asked for the guide-lines written up by a fellow colourist, not by a production worker and several attempts to strike up a discussion with the Marvel production department have gone unanswered.

Reviews

Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, ***Comics International****'s comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.*

Review codes: *Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a* ***1*** *to* ***10*** *basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <---> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare* ***Bone*** *with* ***X-Men****, but review each within their genre.*

Review panel: *Chris D. Bowen (CDB), Chris E. Bunting (CEB), Jon Edwards (JE), Paul Gravett (PG), Stephen Hall (SH), Jae Leitch (JL), Andrew Lewis (AL), Dominic McDonagh (DM), Lee Nelson (LN), Rob Nott (RN), Terence Stewart (TS), Mat Thomas (MT), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

Dark Horse

BTVS: Willow and Tara: Wilderness 1

by Golden + Benson & various

Chris Golden and Amber Benson combine to write a second rate Princess Mononoke clone. I read an essay on how *Buffy*'s use of kung-fu fighting elements was facile and contrary to the tradition of 'fight' movies: it is simple to see here how Wiccan traditions have been distilled in a similar manner to produce Wicca-lite, made to bear passing resemblance through use of key buzzwords, thus removing the need for any troublesome research. (JL) 2

Fort 2

by Lenkov & Irving

<=> More twists and turns in this dark Lovecraftian tale as America's turn-of-the-century moneymen get involved in the plot. Fort teams up with a benign extraterrestrial to track down the killer-creature and Harry Houdini (Necronaut #3) makes a cheeky appearance on a billboard. (AL) 8

Hellboy: The Third Wish 1

by Mignola

Mike Mignola returns to his classic creation, Hellboy, with all his usual dark humour and heavy ink usage. The good-natured demon, in an attempt to answer questions about his own origin, ventures to the African plains to visit a wizened mystic, but instead ends up facing vengeful mermaids. Wouldn't you just know it! (MAT) 7

Oh My Goddess! 89

by Fujishima

<=> Devious little pervert Banpei (kids may prefer to think of him as 'cute') continues his relentless pursuit of his de-mannequinned Welcome Girl, despite her strong signals against such. I can only hope that Kosuke Fujishima gives us a twist in the tale – although the *Learning to Love* subtitle renders this unlikely – as the way the story is currently moving is unpalatable. (JL) 6

Super Manga Blast! 23

by various

<=> SMB! continues its varied serialisations of popular manga strips. Club 9 hostess Haruo bumps into the Japanese President in Makoto Kobayshi's light-hearted strip. *Seraphic Feather* continues to drag its painfully thin sci-fi plot interspersed with T&A to some form of mid-point. Young triclops, Pai and her immortal companion Yakumo face a hidden temple of "devouring-fiend-worms" in *3x3 Eyes*. Meanwhile *What's Michael*'s Catzilla has more earthy worries, as she pines over the pedigree feline across the road. (MAT) 7

DC Comics

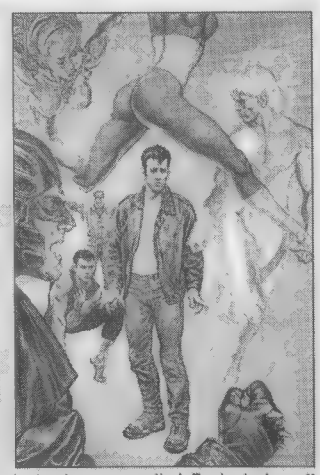
American Century 16

by Chaykin + Tischman & Ross + Stokes; Vertigo

<=> Poor old Harry Kraft, the globe-trotting adventurer (and gigolo) sure can pick 'em, as yet another woman deceives him. He ends his trip to gay Paree and being embroiled in art counterfeiting with a good punch-up and betrayal. Perhaps Howard Chaykin and David Tischman's protagonist may learn to keep his pants on next time, but I doubt it. (MAT) 7

Authority Kev 1

by Ennis & Fabry; WildStorm



While Warren Ellis and Mark Millar demanded a very American gloss for their widescreen operatics, Garth Ennis opts for a very British feel to this special, and is ably rewarded by his long-term partner-in-crime Glenn Fabry. So we open on our man Kev being disturbed while having a 'tom-tit' before moving on to binmen, nosey neighbours, village churches, football shirts and squaddies sitting around in seedy bars. But Authority stalwarts needn't be concerned; the action then shifts gear and it's back to dirty great spaceships, aliens, spattered brains and superhero smart talk. Which is different, but also very well done. (AL) 8

If this one-shot is typical of the intended future direction of The Authority then I'm glad the book was cancelled. Ennis dashes off a one-joke script based around a loser called Kev who finds himself set up to kill The Authority. This sort of self deprecatory humour is meat and potatoes to Ennis and he's rapidly stereotyping himself as a character writer. If your idea of a good Authority script includes cartoon 'Mars Attacks' aliens and a turn back time ending worse than the one in the first Superman film then this is the comic for you. (RN) 4

Ennis and Fabry's "lost" issues resurface in this one-shot. As would be expected Ennis goes directly for a farcical take on the team, as would-be assassin Kev Hawkins finds himself the pawn of an inter-dimensional invasion. Ennis's toilet humour, as funny as it is, doesn't have same impact as Ellis or Millar's smart arse dialogue, with a daft plot and lame conclusion. Similarly Fabry's art, while great to see inside the covers, is not really in the same league as his wide-screen predecessors. (MAT) 6

Automatic Kafka 1

by Casey & Wood; WildStorm

Reading like the bastard offspring of Grant Morrison's Doom Patrol and Peter Milligan's Enigma, Automatic Kafka is a comic that simply tries too hard. Appearing 10 years too late, it wants to subvert and reinvent the superhero genre, whilst mocking its own post-modern pretensions at the same time. On the basis of this first issue there's a lot of art school posturing but precious little substance. The comic most likely to be subtitled 'Pretentious, Moi?' (RN) 5

The Crusades 18

by Seagle & Jones + Randall; Vertigo

<=> Venus begins work in a medieval themed restaurant, ditches Marx again, and starts wearing the Godfrey's armour to scare local undesirables before finally finding Godfrey still alive after the eartthquake. Meanwhile Addas's boss tries to re-open the case on the Knight. Seagle effortlessly crams in subplots without making the book a dense read, and the art, as ever, is superbly atmospheric. With only two issues left, still the best Vertigo title. (MT) 9

Fables 3

by Willingham & Medina + Leialoha; Vertigo

<-> Oh, dear. The investigation drags on with more questioning and a reconstruction of the crime scene. The only relief from what is turning out to be a very dry title is Bigby Wolf's metamorphosis into the Big Bad Wolf, revealing the potential for big thrills and general weirdness a comic like this clamours for. (AL) 5

Green Lantern 152

by Winnick & Battle + Campanella

<-> What exceptional value! Winnick pulls out all the stops this month to give us two hoary old clichés for the price of one! Not content with having another hero possessed (gasp!) by an evil force and made to fight Green lantern, the villain also thrashes the heroes but doesn't kill them, leaving them for another time. What's wrong with now? (MT) 1

Hawkman 5

by Johns + Robinson & Morales

<+> There's a bearded archer on the loose in St Roch, sticking folks with arrows left, right and centre. Has Ollie gone bad? An improvement on previous issues, as Geoff Johns and James Robinson write a riff on the classic Hawkman/Green Arrow confrontations, allowing GA to tell Carter exactly what's what concerning his constant pestering of Hawkgirl. Take that, you winged oaf! (TS) 6

Hellblazer 174

by Azzarello & Frusin; Vertigo

<++> The climactic conclusion of the *Ashes and Dust* storyline actually turns out to be better than anticipated. However Havlik's sudden declaration of attraction towards Turro seemed completely unconvincing and unnecessary. And so from next issue Mike Carey takes over. It's a shame that a fine writer like Brian Azzarello was so obviously misplaced as chronicler of this very British comicbook character. (AL) 6

<=> And so we wave bye-bye to Azzarello as he wraps up his simple and undemanding storyline the only way he knows how, with a typical (for him) Tarantino-esque shoot out. The fact that we care so little when the supporting characters die speaks volumes for the writer's failure to develop them as interesting people in the first place. (RN) 3

High Roads 5

by Lobdell & Yu + Alanguilan; Cliffhanger

<+> The quirky team reaches its destination to find that the secret of Hitler's Arctic ice castle isn't what everybody had been led to believe. This issue is book-ended by bosoms, opening with a flashback to Nick's first time with a well-endowed farm-girl, and closing with an equally pneumatic leather-clad Nazi dominatrix-type showing up. Don'cha just love post-feminist irony? (AL) 7

JSA 38

by Goyer + Johns & Sadowski

<+> Steve Sadowski's swan song on this title, and with the inks of Pepoy, we're treated to a much softer, less stiff, interpretation of the JSA. A quiet issue, focusing on Jakeem Thunder and the newly revitalized Hourman. David Goyer and Geoff Johns write these spotlights well, although I have a little trouble reconciling the Hourman here with the jerk that ran around during the Eighties. I guess he grew up. (TS) 7

<-> It's Father's Day in the DCU, and while JJThunders tracks down his missing dad, Hourman uses up some of his dad's last hour by having a good chat. And that's it. The art is suited to the story, functional but bland, but does nothing to up the ante. There's no excuse for consistently good titles to keep throwing in these feel-good filler issues, it's just laziness disguised as character development without conflict, tension or drama, and at the end of the day we have to pay for it. (MT) 2

The Last Man 1

by Vaughan & Guerra + Marzan; Vertigo

This could have been so bad, but in actual fact this first issue is rather good. A plague wipes out virtually every man in the world

within the space of a few seconds (presumably it's not an airborne virus then?). The script is tight, the basic premise interesting and provided the main character doesn't turn into some post feminist new man – so popular in all those God awful thirty something relationship novels – this could be a next big thing for Vertigo. (RN) 7

Lucifer 28

by Carey & Ormston; Vertigo

<++> Who would have thought Mike Carey could do humour? In a twisted road trip that stretches from just after the beginning of existence to almost the end of the world (again), Gaudium and Spera attempt to resurrect Elaine Belloc. Maybe not everything Kerouac and Burroughs saw was down to hallucinogens. (JL) 8

<=> I don't ordinarily like short stories. After all, if a story is strong enough to stand on its own in a single issue, it's strong enough for a 12-part maxiseries with alternative covers and crossovers with at least four other unrelated titles, right? But Carey's short stories are an exception to the rule. This one tells the tale of two fallen cherubs on a quest through the Realms of Pain. It's funny in all the right places and of course it's great. Like I said, it's written by Carey. (RN) 8

<-> The fallen cherub Gaudium tries to save the soul of Ellaine Belloc as Carey ties up his plot threads before Inferno begins. This issue brims with humour and slapstick, proving once again that a filler issue isn't filler when a good writer's at the helm. Ormston's art, reminiscent of a good Tim Burton movie's backgrounds is perfect for the lo-fi horror of this issue. One of the best of Vertigo's crop. (MT) 8

Lucifer: Children and Monsters

by Carey & Gross + Kelly + Ormston; Vertigo; tpbk

Despite retaining Gaiman's prose style – melodramatic, yet not bathetic – it is obvious from the beginning of the journey into Japan's underworld that Mike Carey has now taken ownership of Lucifer. Again and again he reminds us just what an unsympathetic lead the former Prince of Hell is (and should be), whilst finding time to indulge his own interests in the nature of torment and the innocent cruelty of misguided children. That this trade paperback does not live up to my misguided CI colleague's cover blurb, "the best fantasy comic around" is mainly due to its merely serviceable art. One can only imagine the *ukiyo-e* that JH Williams III and Mick Gray might have provided. (JL) 7

The Titans 43

by Peyer & Kitson + Pascoe

<+> The second issue into Tom Peyer's stint and things have perked up noticeably. The Titans travel to another dimension, and land on a planet of junkies – Roy Harper's worst nightmare. I might question continuing a plot from Jay Faerber's run, but Peyer seems to be running with it. The team dynamics he's setting up are good (a little conflict is always appreciated) and Barry Kitson continues to shine; this may be his best issue yet, with the inks of James Pascoe. (TS) 7

Vertigo Pop! Tokyo 2

by Vankin & Fisher; Vertigo

<=> Every so often Vertigo manages to find an artist who brings something that little bit different to the table. Seth Fisher, with his Lego-like figures moving through a superbly detailed topography, would appear to be the latest; he is the saving grace on this book. In writer Jon Vankin's three years in Japan he seems to have learned less than if he'd read a few lurid guide books. (JL) 6

<=> Vertigo's new pop culture label of minis is off to a cracking start with this fun and richly detailed tale of plastic pop adolescence and deranged Japanese culture. It's fun, it's frivolous and it depicts a culture that's more bizarre and alien sounding than any sci-fi novel I've ever read. Funny that. (RN) 7

<=> Young American tourist Steve continues to get embroiled with his object of lust, school girl Maki, her inept Yakusa brother Ryuji, and self-obsessed pop idol Hike. Vankin successfully evokes the weirder sides of Japanese culture and Fisher's meticulously detailed panels and stylised characters are a definite visual pleasure, making for one weird trip. (MAT) 7

The Dark Knight Strikes Again 3

by Miller & Varley

<=> The long-awaited conclusion to this controversial epic. Critics may have carped on about everything from Frank Miller's motives in creating this series to the art style employed, but the bottom line is that DK2 has been extremely entertaining and sometimes thought-provoking. Certainly, the treatment of certain characters goes against their established personas, but Miller's portrayal of a flawed Superman does follow on from the character's depiction in The Dark Knight Returns. This is a very dark take on the DC icons, and could probably be labelled an Elseworlds book if that particular concept had not been overdone and devalued. Miller and Lynn Varley's art looks gritty and dynamic, perfectly illustrating the story being told. (SH) 9

<=> You'd need several hands' worth of fingers to count the reasons why DK2 sucked. But for starters there's the sparse, rushed artwork; the garish colouring; the pacing that left the reader feeling like he was skimming through 20 channels of TV at random; the let's see how many old DC characters we can refer to on a single page in place of plot; and the sense that Miller had run out of ideas and was simply writing and drawing on auto pilot. A deeply unsatisfying body of work; even more so when compared to the original. (RN) 4

Wonder Woman 183

by Jimenez & Martinez

<--> Finally, the conclusion to the Skartaris "epic", and what a mess Phil Jimenez has written himself into. Villainy Inc's motives are addled, and I suspect never given much thought. There's some confusing twaddle about time reversing (though only for the selected few – why?), and Wonder Woman wraps things up with a punch, more or less. Roy Allan Martinez continues to improve as an artist and there seems to be less reliance on static imagery, which helps considerably. (TS) 5

Image

Battle of the Planets 2

by Sharrieff & Tortosa

<-> I guess the problem these nostalgia comics face is trying to recreate the original magic of the shows they present, whilst giving the now adult readership something more befitting their age. However it is this 'adultizing' which removes the magic; Battle of the Planets could now be any teen superhero title, with its strong violence and simplistic characters. (JL) 4

Doom Patrol 10

by Arcudi & Huat

<+> In an effort to prevent themselves being replaced by actors playing the original DP, the team rushes into a confrontation with Amazo, only to be waylaid by an encounter with the spooky graveyard chap. John Arcudi's dialogue crackles and pops, and Tan Eng Huat's characters and page design bristle with kinetic energy. Combine with Dave Stewart's colours, and this is probably the most exhilarating read of the month. (TS) 8

Doom Patrol 11

<=> The team finds itself in Hell while Jost tries to put together a TV show based on the original DP to recoup his losses. Some nastily scripted private hell scenes – particularly Vic's – mix with action, humour and Huat's one of a kind art to make another issue in an unbroken run of excellence. Buy this book! (MT) 9

<=> The dysfunctional team's inner demons are unleashed as they face the threats of Hell, allowing Huat another excuse to impress with his fine monster designs. Arcudi continues to set up clever plots revolving around the team and their ambitious manager, but the events are still a little un-coordinated and loose, creating some puzzling moments. (MAT) 7

Rex Mundi 0

by Nelson & Johnson

Opening in Thirties Paris, physician Julien Sauniere is asked to investigate missing manuscripts from a secret library, only to find himself mixed in a tale of high-conspiracy and dark magic. With its shades of *The Name of the Rose* and a Cthulu-esque edge, Eric Johnson and Arvid Nelson have created a rich alt-historical tale. Johnson does an exceptional job creating sinister atmospherics with his detailed pages. And to top it all, there's a backup strip of CI's very own Brother Matthew. (MAT) 7

Tomb Raider 23

by Rieber & Green + Sibal; Top Cow

<--> Lara Croft undergoes a rites of passage through a supernatural realm in order to escape the Black Mandela's otherworldly trap. The dumb, perfunctory script and spiritless artwork makes a mockery of Croft creator Toby Gard's original vision. Like Dan Jurgens previously, new writer John Ney Rieber's conservative approach dilutes the character's uniqueness. Where are the breathtaking, widescreen adventures of a larger-then-life heroine that the series demands? (JE) 3

Marvel

Agent X 1

by Simone & Udon

An amnesiac attaches himself to Wade Wilson's old boss and begins to tackle some merc work. Gail Simone is quite successful in creating a mildly entertaining read, harking back to Joe Kelly's irreverent early Deadpool issues. A more cartoonish take on the art would help out in the humour department though. (LN) 6

Alias 12

by Bendis & Gaydos + Bagley; MAX Comics

<=> Jessica continues her investigations facing small town bigotry, dumb teenagers, and comes a cropper of the demon drink again. Brian Michael Bendis's Spidey collaborator Mark Bagley also drops by, providing an interesting counterpoint to Michael Gaydos's more moody and realistic art. Bendis is doing great work with this title, producing a fallible and all the more believable female character, who just happens to be a superhero. (MAT) 8

Alias 13

by Bendis & Gaydos; MAX Comics

<=> Reliable as ever, Alias never lets up on telling a good solid story with the best dialogue and characterization this side of Lucifer and The Ultimates. Jessica's latest case is drawing her deeper into the familiar Marvel territory of mutant racism. But where the standard X-books handle the subject in an often patronizing and preaching way, this just sounds all too real. Wonderful. (RN) 8

Amazing Spider-Man 43

by Straczynski & Romita Jr + Hanna

<+> J. Michael Straczynski brings back Doctor Octopus but comes at it from a new angle,

with him being the one under threat this time around. John Romita Jr continues to draw with all guns blazing – not only does he make Doc Ock look like he should (more a lean scientist than beefy muscleman) he also makes his nemesis, Mr Carlyle, look threatening. (CEB) 8

<=> JMS moves towards his examination of Spidey's classic villains as Dr Octopus gets double dealt by an unscrupulous businessman, just as Peter Parker is trying to make amends in his personal life. Straczynski has done a great job freeing Aunt May from her cliché-ridden hole, allowing her to become a more active character in Peter's life. Thankfully, Marvel also recognises Romita Jr's position as a classic Spider-Man artist by finally letting him draw his own covers. (MAT) 7

Apache Skies 1

by Ostrander & Manco; MAX Comics

Marvel returns once again to the western genre with John Ostrander's reinterpretation of the Rawhide Kid and Apache Kid, as a lone gunman seeks revenge. Unhindered by that dreaded Comics Code, Ostrander, ably assisted by Leonardo Manco's taut painted art, is allowed to make the book more like Unforgiven than Bonanza. (MAT) 6

The Avengers 56

by Busiek & Paquette + Snyder

<+> Watch out for the I.R.S. Ahh, Kurt Busiek, the writer. Undoubtedly deceived by a Skrull the last 12 months, the true Busiek reappears for the final curtain. A harmless standalone issue, but with characterisation on the right note. Judging by the art, Yanick Paquette should be on a regular Marvel book by the end of the year. (CDB) 7

Cage 4

by Azzarello & Corben; MAX Comics

<=> Cage's playing of both sides in the dirty gang war comes back to haunt him, as his indestructible body is tested to the limit. Richard Corben continues to do a fantastic job illustrating the dirty reality of street life, whilst Brian Azzarello has already proved his ability to portray the dark side of the tracks with his Vertigo work. The two come together to produce one mean package. (MAT) 7

Captain Marvel 34

by David & Kirby + Sotomayor

<-> J. J. Kirby is no ChrisCross, but he is a worthwhile fill-in artist. Writer Peter David brings Captain Marvel into focus but unfortunately relegates both his trademark humour and Rick Jones to the background. Hopefully this won't continue in the relaunch which could result in this – the best super hero comic out there – becoming another run-of-the-mill title which takes itself too seriously. (CEB) 8

Daredevil 35

by Bendis & Maleev; Marvel Knights

<=> Still suffering in the aftermath of his identity being revealed, DD throws himself into his work only to face arch-enemy and general nutter Hyde trying to bring the house down. Bendis successfully evokes a hero on the edge, with Maleev's grim 'n' gritty art adding to the tense atmosphere. Fortunately Spidey drops by to lighten the tone. (MAT) 7

Deadline 4

by Rosemann & Davis

<+> The series manages to rise above a surfeit of clichés again, and reaches a very effective conclusion. The final punchline is crap, but otherwise all the loose ends get tied up. As befits a soap opera, all ends more or less happily, and the heroine learns better. Schmaltz, but stylishly delivered and framed with Guy Davis's wonderful artwork. (DM) 7

<+> Bill Rosemann ends his heroine's investigation into the suspicious super-villain killings, uncovering double-crossings and sinister intent. Davis is well accommodated to this examination of what happens between the pages of your average superhero book, bringing his dirty scratchy linework to bear on super-ville. We also finally found out who killed Kat's goldfish. (MAT) 7

League of Extraordinary Gentlemen volume 2 #1

by Moore & O'Neill; America's Best Comics

Most people will buy this because it's Alan Moore, but artist Kev O'Neill is easily the true star of this title. Coloured flawlessly by Ben Dimagmaliw, it surpasses anything the former Nemesis artist has previously created both in scope and detail – and that's saying something! Does it really matter that not an awful lot happens when it's as wonderfully drawn as this? (AL) 9

Everyone knows that this series will deal with the Martian invasion, but Moore still manages to surprise with his script. This is a prologue, set on Mars and filling in the reasons for the invasion. Moore gets in his usual array of literary references by bringing in Martians from accounts other than H. G. Wells', and Kevin O'Neill's artwork is as brilliant as ever. A phenomenal curtain raiser. (DM) 8

Moore returns to his Victorian team with another epic opening chapter, as malevolent forces mount an invasion from Mars. As ever, O'Neill's doodling line work is a wonder to behold, effortlessly depicting epic battles on the surface of the red planet. Moore's love of the strange and obscure emerges with the mock Traveller's Almanac, just in case you ever wanted to learn the perils of the south coast. (MAT) 8

Elektra: Glimpse & Echo 1

by Morse; Marvel Knights

With his chunky angular painted art, Scott Morse provides one of the most strikingly original interpretations of the Greek assassin for some time, as she gets mixed up with those meddling ninjas The Hand once again for this mini. Some attractive work, although why it's not been utilized on the main series is anyone's guess. (MAT) 7

Fantastic Four 59

by Warren & Grant

<-> Adam Warren winds up his tale of Ben Grimm's unfortunate encounter with his rebellious craggy hide, as another of Reed's fantastical inventions returns circumstances to the status quo. Keron Grant's manga-esque art takes a down-turn, with highly uncomplimentary inking dulling his originality. Fortunately the manga real deal, in the form of Kia Asamiya, provides a dynamic cover. (MAT) 5

The Hood 3

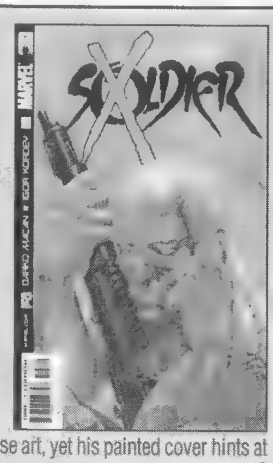
by Vaughan & Hotz; MAX Comics

<+> Parker's wicked ways start catching up with him – only time will tell whether he's really succeeded in talking his way out of it. And in the main plot he starts getting to grips with the powers of the Hood. This is shaping up quite nicely now and could still have a few surprises in store. (AL) 7

Soldier X 1

by Macan & Kordey

Nathan Summers mopes around Egypt moaning about the lack of direction in his life. And that's about it, really. Darko Macan jettisons the harder edged Cable found before the character's last title was cancelled for an unwelcome infusion of spectacularly unfunny comedy. But the most worrying aspect of this relaunch is that this take on Cable is even more soulless than Rob Liefeld's. (LN) 2



The once impenetrably complex X-character gets a reboot, taking its stepping point from the more down-to-earth reinterpretation by David Tischman. Macan surprisingly takes the emphasis away from Nate, allowing us to catch up on the lives of the supporting characters following Cable's disappearance. Igor Kordey provides his usual loose art, yet his painted cover hints at an unused talent. (MAT) 6

Incredible Hulk 43

by Jones & Weeks + Palmer

<+> Disgraced police sniper Sally Riker pursues the mysterious Agent Pratt and the drugged Bruce Banner into the mountains, and all hell breaks loose. A good ending to an occasionally disappointing storyline has plenty of tension and suspense, and Weeks' art, while not portraying the Hulk very well, is an improvement on recent issues with his cliffhanging scenes being particularly vertigo-inducing. (MT) 8

<=> Bruce Jones ends his hostage drama with a nail-biting finale as the agents' machinations on Banner are thwarted and our hero is left on the run yet again. Lee Weeks unfortunately lives up to his name, producing yet another unconvincing rendition of the Hulkster, which no amount of sumptuous colouring from Studio F can hide. Perhaps Marvel should look to the talented Kaare Andrews, whose covers successfully capture the menace of the jade giant. (MAT) 7

Infinity Abyss 3

by Starlin & Milgrom

<=> Good lord, this must rank amongst the worst comics ever published. Incredibly dense exposition-heavy dialogue, patronising narration, ridiculously over-dynamic poses for no apparent reason, and no real plot beyond the Something Cosmic Somewhere cliché. It all contributes to this comic not being worth the paper it's printed on, let alone $2.99 (MT) 1

Infinity Abyss 4

by Starlin & Milgrom

Thanos fights Thanos-clones based on Marvel characters, more popular characters pointlessly fight nameless aliens to boost sales, and a normal New Jersey couple christen their daughter Atleza. Atleza?! The nonsensical plot aside, the dialogue is appalling ("My spidersense is picking it up also." – who talks out loud like this?), fu... (MT) 0

Marvel Knights Double Shot 5

by Figueroa & Ponticelli; Marvel Knights

<=> The bad guys hunt the good guys, one of whom gets captured. Terrible characterisation, appaling action scenes, trite dialogue and unlikely plot devices – the hostage sends a signal from the underground, prompting Black Widow to infer that the secret base is a train. Why couldn't they just be catching a train? Even villains use the subway. All this plus inconsistent, grossly misproportionate and messy art. A prime example of what does not make a Mature Readers title. (MT) 1

New X-Men 128

by Morrison & Kordey

Xavier's X-Corporation opens worldwide, Jean Grey manifests some very pheonix-like powers, and Emma Frost puts the moves on Cyclops. As ever, Grant Morrison keeps loads of plates spinning, and Igor Kordey's art – while not of the high standard of Quitely's – is fast growing on me; his Professor X is downright creepy looking. (MT) 8

New X-Men 129

by Morrison & Kordey

<-> Morrison's scripting begins to struggle, as Fantomex – a cross between Night Thrasher and Moon Knight with the attitude of The Punisher – takes centre stage. Kordey's art doesn't help, as at points it's difficult to make out who's who. When Darkstar says "Oh God, what's happening?" she could just as easily be referring to the calibre of this comic. (CEB) 3

<=> Enigmatic two-gun killer Fantomex takes Jean and Professor X home to meet his mother, and offers startling revelations about Weapon X as Weapon XII runs rampant in the channel tunnel. Kordey's dark artwork improves with every issue and Morrison's high impact obscurity style is still relentlessly delivering the goods. (MT) 8

<=> The mysterious Fantomex seeks refuge amongst Xavier's corporation and reveals secrets about the Weapon X programme and even deadlier threats to come. Morrison continues to make the X-World his own, daring to delve into Wolverine's origins and rebranding Xavier's dream for a modern audience. Kordey's formerly muddy art has improved sufficiently as not to be so distracting from Morrison's work. (MAT) 7

The Order 6

by Busiek & Duffy + Haley

<=> With a cast of hundreds the Order face the Marvel Universe head on. A simplistic but enjoyable ending to a mini within a series. Although this may be the end of this title, it is worth noting that this isn't the only Marvel title that deserved to sell better (Captain Marvel/Black Panther?). Guess you can't please everybody all the time. (CDB) 5

Peter Parker, Spider-Man 46

by Jenkins & Ramos + Faucher

<=> The Spider-slugfest roundabout continues to rotate slowly, with a third issue of ridiculously over-worded fisticuffs. The Peter Parker written by Paul Jenkins differs greatly from the one in other Spider-Man titles, in that he's written as a whiny self-righteous jerk throughout. In fact Jenkins actually has me hoping that the cod-insane Goblin will somehow manage to kill him off, but somehow I doubt it. All flash with no substance, this is everything that's wrong in comics today. (MT) 2

<+> Green Goblin continues to exact vengeance on Peter Parker and friends, leaving Spidey howling for blood. Although this may just be another "hero fights villain" tale, Jenkins skilfully captures Osborne's manic desire for revenge and Parker's pent-up aggression and need for retribution. Coupled with Humberto Ramos's dynamic manga-influenced art under Studio F's bright colouring, this title has a definite edge over its competitors. (MAT) 7

Spider-Man: Blue 3

by Loeb & Sale; Marvel Knights

<-> Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's nostalgic foray into Spidey's early career continues apace, this time confronting his scaly foe, The Lizard, and a certain fiery redhead. While Sale's stripped down art may reflect simpler times, it doesn't carry the retro appeal of nostalgists like Steve Rude, and Loeb's script seems more perfunctory than insightful. (MAT) 6

Spider-Man/Daredevil 1

by Mathews & Mavlian; Marvel Knights

With attractive Sam Keith-esque art (albeit less exaggerated) by newcomer Vatche Mavlian, this neat little one-shot highlights the relationship between Spidey and Hornhead as they deal with the disappearance of a little girl. Brett Mathews manages to capture the heroes' differing world views, but offers few great revelations. (MAT) 6

Spider-Man: Get Kraven 3

by Zimmerman & McCrea + Hodgkins

<=> Al Kraven sets up office, and his girlfriend Timber beats up the producers of a new sitcom at an audition. This great Spider-Man spin-off/Hollywood satire hits the mark again. Ron Zimmerman's writing is well-paced, with plenty of great snappy dialogue, and bursts of action in all the right places. John McCrea's art, particularly in the Rothstein Brothers scenes, still has all of its structured messiness, but is also very expressive and flowing. A cracker. (MT) 8

The Thing 2

by Johns & Kolins + Lanning

<=> Ben's excursion to the countryside ends up bringing out a few familiar (and rather unwelcome) faces. Geoff Johns continues to convey well Grimm's put-upon attitude to life, as he finds himself in much deeper water than initially thought. Scott Kolins' quirky linework continues to bring vibrancy to what is essentially an old fashioned tale. (MAT) 7

X-Statix 1

by Milligan & Allred + Cooke

<=> Peter Milligan attempts the most self-referential story in comics, as a psychotic former X-Force uberfan prepares to wreak vengeance on the creators of the team for allowing Edie Sawyer to die; or perhaps because he'll have to buy a whole load of rebranded X-Statix merchandise. A dazzling mix of asides on Rob Liefeld and Umberto Eco, with the *Big Brother* method of choosing a superteam, you have to wonder how many issues this unfortunately named comic will go before it disappears up its own arse. It's fascinating to note that comics seem to have discovered the notions of post-modernism and pop art around the same time as the rest of the world is abandoning them. (JL) 6

The renamed team is distracted in its efforts to promote a relaunch and stay in business by the latest TV reality show. By continuing in the same vein, replete with disturbing character origins, fantastic costume designs and best of all, the killing fields of the training ground, Milligan and Mike Allred prove to be the best of the revamp bunch. (LN) 7

The re-monikered mutant team still has all the previous feuding and bickering as it faces the possibility of being usurped by another media-friendly team of mutant Popstars and the induction of a new member. Milligan continues to pull no punches, playing up every cynical cliché against his characters, whilst Allred's bright and breezy style deepens the satirical content. Additionally, Darwyn Cooke's Doop video diary is there for some disturbing light relief. (MAT) 8

Thor 51

by Jurgens & Raney + Hanna

<=> And Gods shall watch over us. Dan Jurgens continues to explore the limits of Thor's claim to Godhood. An appearance by Spider-Man (blatant exploitation of the Spider-Man movie hype) nevertheless allows Tom Raney the opportunity to impress on a down to earth scale as yet another artist begins the countdown to his departure from this title (and Marvel). (CDB) 6

The Ultimates 6

by Millar & Hitch

<+> So after the fight we get the clearing up. Then it's back to that lovely character-driven stuff that's set this title apart from so many others, counterpointed with a domestic between Hank and Janet that goes rather wrong. This is superheroes in the real world done better than any time before. A sheer joy to read. (AL) 9

Happy-happy, joy-joy! The Ultimates is just soooo good. With Banner-Hulk under full sedation and as the clean up crews move in to patch together what's left of New York, the Ultimates get to pose for the world's press and deal with their own injuries. But in the case of Hank Pym some of those injuries are mental rather than physical. The cliffhanger at the end of this issue bodes well for the second story arc. I'm already dribbling with anticipation for it. The Ultimates – it really is what it says on the cover. (RN) 10

Uncanny X-Men 409

by Casey & Phillips

<-> The X-Men defeat the X-drug pushing Vanisher by having the X-hooker occupy him for two weeks and then fighting him in a restaurant. Why they didn't just fight is never explained, perhaps Joe Casey thought that a couple of saucy bathtub pages would dazzle the average reader into not noticing the lack of substance here. Sean Phillips' art is always welcome, but as any DIY buff will tell you, you can't just paint over filler. (MT) 5

X-Men Unlimited 37

by Andrews & various

<+> Cover artist extraordinaire Kaare Andrews sets up a twee storyline for his artistic associates to illustrate, as a mourning father conjures up a young boy with disastrous effects for the X-Men. Amongst the artists, Andrews' own cartoony depictions of the many X-Folk are highly appealing; Joshua Middleton's delicate line is particularly attractive whilst Troy Nixey's twisted demonic visions are just as gruesome. It's just a shame that this storyline, and the title in general, remain rather flimsy and humdrum. (MAT) 7

X-Treme X-Men 16

by Claremont & Larroca + Liquid!

<=> The *Dimension X* saga concludes, although you'd be forgiven for noticing. With its barely involving storyline, and another faux-shock ending, this is all highly inconsequential. Ironically, after spending so long coming together, the conclusions feel decidedly rushed. Claremont's work has completely lost the punch that he once had with his earlier X-Sagas. Unfortunately, while Larroca's art is pretty, it's not enough to justify returning to this title. (MAT) 5

US Indies

Akiko 49

by Crilley; Sirius

<=> Really off dialogue – these supposed 10-year olds talk like mid-teens – is partially counterbalanced by lovely pastel art. The story seems rushed however, possibly cut off in mid flow when Mark Crilley realised it was turning a little darker than he intended. (JL) 6

Gloom Cookie 13

by Valentino & Burns; Slave Labor

<+> Serena Valentino resists the urge to repeat herself yet again, and continues to build on the storylines that are already in place, aided and abetted by yet another new artist. After John Gebbia's sudden loss of enthusiasm, however, Breehn John Burn's art comes as a very pleasant surprise. (DM) 7

Hipflask: Unnatural Selection

by Starkings + Casey & Ladronn; Comicraft

Joe Casey brings a very sinister edge to the origin of Richard Starkings' Comicraft mascot, the anthropomorphic hippo Hipflask. Jose Ladronn does a superlative job of illustrating the character's dark roots, proving beyond a doubt he's more than "another Kirby knockoff", producing brilliant designs and beautiful colours. A successful little comic, considering its own off-hand genesis. (MAT) 7

Cinderalla

by Mizuno; Viz; tpbk

Possibly the most bizarre comic I've ever seen. A macabre reprise of Cinderella, drawn in a cutie-pie manga style with elements of Lichtenstein. It's the sort of product – and I use that term deliberately – that acquires cult status then transcends that cult, in the manner of something like *Emily the Strange*. For me Junko Mizuno has designed her characters with just that in mind, creating something that is easier to put on a t-shirt or keychain than make a comprehensible story out of. This collection then is more interesting as the primary stages of the product life cycle in Western markets; here we have the taster, the ground floor edginess, which will pass through a stage of being *alternative* before being adopted by the mainstream, and then discarded for the new fad. (JL) 5

Hopeless Savages: Ground Zero 2

by van Meter & O'Malley + Norrie; Oni Press

<--> A needlessly intricate timeline – attempted segues from present to past to even further past – couple with occasionally impenetrable dialogue to produce an inadvertently difficult read. Even more unforgivable is the lazy unoriginality perpetrated by both writer and artist – thwarted love requires a torrential downpour, geeks have the periodic table on their walls – making this book as unsubtle as the punk music it is rooted in. (JL) 4

Kodocha volume 1: Sana's Stage

by Obana; Tokyopop; tpbk

Although not much more than an archetypal coming of age story, this book's solid pacing, tempered enthusiasm and refusal to lock itself into the perennial overcomplications of typical manga, make it a really fun read. Simultaneously presenting the male/female and optimist/pessimist dichotomy alongside the Japanese fixation of classroom anarchy is no mean feat, but one which Miho Obana – with the help of translator Sarah Dyer – achieve nicely. In contrast to her peers, Obana favours resolution and progress, showing an admirable lack of regard for the marketing execs who would probably prefer something more convoluted (ie: requiring more volumes). (JL) 7

Love and Rockets 5

by Hernandez & Hernandez

<-> This issue sees a superfluity of Beto's surrealist interludes such as the amusing treatise on the kinds of lifeforms likely to emerge once mankind has destroyed itself, the curious *Thrilling Adventures of Sister Mary Joseph* or the single-page *Julio's Day* (Julio's Filler more like). *The High Soft Lisp* is still worryingly graphic (or should that be pornographic?) and *Me For the Unknown* needs to be wrapped up sooner rather than later. Again the highpoint is Jaime's contribution, dipping into the past of horned cuckold HR Costigan. (AL) 6

Love Hina volume 3

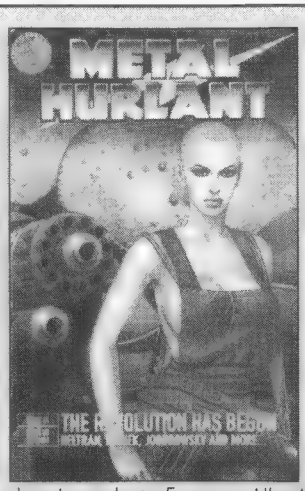
by Akamatsu; TokyoPop; tpbk

<-> Keitaro, having failed his exams again, decides to hit the road. As does Naru, and much fisting (sic) of hapless 'pervert' Keitaro ensues. If the point of a story is plot advancement then this fails utterly. Fittingly the 'almost-but-never-actually-quite-a' couple are given a turtle as a gift at the end of this testudinially paced manga. However I've never been noted for my patience: those more virtuous may find the suspense of the 'will-they-won't-they?' story simply thrilling. (JL) 5

Oni Press Colour Special 2002

by various; Oni Press

The newest annual allows the mono publisher to splash out a little, highlighting new series in full colour. Some strips place tongue in cheek: Warren Ellis has fun with paranormal investigators and a certain boy genius; Gail Simone takes the P out of American tourists and the Red Star crew get their own back on a certain bald comics writer in their new strip *Buddha Master & Angst Man*. Some visually outstanding work can be found in previews of Daniel Krall's new *One Plus One*, and Mike Huddleston's disturbing tale *Deep Sleeper*. So, some impressive talent and another great anthology from this daring publisher. (MAT) 7



Metal Hurlant 1

by various; Humanoids Publishing

Beautifully illustrated by European artists such as Gerald Pavel, Das Pastoras and Fred Beltran you could always have bet money on a revamped Metal Hurlant looking good. Sadly, and perhaps also predictably, the storytelling seems an afterthought, being too po-faced and inconsequential to be seen as anything else. And would somebody like to explain why the men's willies were pixilated? (AL) 5

A new version of Heavy Metal, the buxom sci-fi anthology, with the apparent intention of mixing American creators with Europeans. Among others this first issue features Busiek, Alexandro Jodorowsky and Beltran, and all of the strips are of good quality at the very worst. If you'd still enjoy 2000 AD with less-iconic main characters and more European art then this is definitely worth checking out. (MT) 8

The original adult sci-fi anthology returns. Fortunately the book is more than the T&A in chain-mail (or space-suits) that its American off-spring has become, gathering an international cast of collaborators. Kurt Busiek fashions a modern twist to the werewolf genre as one man attempts to escape from the inevitable; Spaniard Das Pastoras gives Frank Quitely a run for his money with his finely muscled savages and Alexandro Jodorowsky teams with Beltran's CGI-worked art for another glimpse at a disturbingly twisted future. Unfortunately, Beltram gives into temptation with some titillating centre pages, on handily shiny paper... (MAT) 7

Peach Girl volume 5

by Ueda; TokyoPop; tpbk

Too soap operatic to work as a love story or as a realistic depiction of school life, the exaggerated machinations of Sae really put me off this book. Its main appeal seems to be to with 10-14 year old girls; judging by the fall-outs that I can remember from my semi-distant schooldays amongst that group, I suppose it's possible that their lives were this complicated. It would be easy to write this off as a soulless, vacuous, teen girl daydream if it wasn't for an ending that verges on cherry-coated date rape. (JL) 5

Pulp Volume 6 #8

by various; Viz

<=> Just as manga titans Shonen Jump and Raijin's move into America is announced, this title ends. So the magazine laments with articles highlighting the best and worst of Manga Hell. Meanwhile, the anthology's own strips wrap up. The brilliantly witty *Short Cuts* ends on another truly surreal moment, exploiting the conventions of comics' visual narrative. *Banana Fish* comes to a suitable jumping off point, as Eiji confronts Ash over the gang violence. Aya finds a way to inherit money in *Dance till Tomorrow*, whilst the disturbing spiral mystery of *Uzumaki* is finally revealed. Pulp attempted to widen the appeal of the Japanese comic offering an eye-opening alternative to schoolgirls with big guns, so it's a great pity to see it go. (MAT) 8

Sojourn 13

by Marz & Land; CrossGen

<+> The art is exceptional this month with lush colouring that seems almost photographic in places. Our clean-cut heroes take a back seat this issue as we see the all too rare human side of one of the main villains. This makes for a nice break in pace and proves that even ugly trolls have feelings. (RN) 7

UK Titles

2000 AD #1304

by various; Rebellion

<=> Gordon Rennie and Ian Gibson bring *Passport to Pimlico* to Mega-City One as the Margaret Rutherford blockers declare their citi-block an independent state. It's a shame they reckoned without Judge Dredd. Elsewhere Dan Abnett and Henry Flint impress with the revamped *VCs*, the crew now complete with a mistrusted Geek. Thrill power to overload anyone's circuits. (AL) 8

Judge Dredd Megazine volume 4 #14

by various; Rebellion

<=> Dave Bishop's history of 2000 AD focuses on the Alan Moore era, examining the creation of Skizz, Halo Jones and DR & Quinch. Andy Diggle and Jock's ex-Judge Lenny Zero returns for a new series and Frazer Irving draws a Ronin version of Durham Red in the startling *Scarlet Apocrypha* series. And there's an awful lot more too, and all of it's good. (AL) 8

Strontium Dog: Portrait of a Mutant

by Grant & Ezquerra; Titan tpbk

Mutant bounty hunter Johnny Alpha was already a well-established and extremely popular character when it was decided in the early '80s to run this epic origin story. Introducing characters such as Middenface McNulty and of course Alpha's bigoted father Nelson B Kreelman, it has since been afforded classic status as it chronicles the young Alpha's fight for freedom and equality. Also in this collected edition is possibly the finest short Strontium Dog story ever in which Alpha hunts down Adolf Hitler. It also features his coolest ever rival, the monosyllabic Styx. (AL) 9

Small Press

Bahala Na '02

by Goodman; £1 from D. Goodman 34 Banner Street, Wavertree Liverpool L15 0HR

A neatly packaged collection of Dave Goodman's strips previously printed in other anthologies. An accomplished draughtsman he offers an impressive range of styles including manga-influenced anthropomorphics. Highlights include a word-free experiment in how dark authority figures stifle creative individuals and the unique '4th Wall', a smart exercise in reader participation. (AL) 8

The Bruising Pit: HMS Elephant Cemetary

by Cake; £1 from J. Cake c/o 65 South Grove, Sale Manchester M33 3AR

Surreal hi-jinks aplenty in the only small press title I've ever seen printed entirely in green ink! There's a walking, talking washing machine and sly digs at David Hasselhoff and Esther Rantzen including an amusing take on the *That's Life*'s odd-shaped vegetables feature. John Cake has a delightfully twisted imagination and gives us pub names such as The Pixie's Piles and The Pansy's Hanky. (AL) 6

Dumbass Comics 3

by Cameron; £2 from N. Cameron 70 Godstow Road, Wolvercote Oxford OX2 8NY

Even if you don't like small press, you'll enjoy this. Neill Cameron is an ultra-cool artist with a nifty line in *Clerks/Pulp Fiction* style dialogue. Whether it's sexy ninja nuns, overblown carnage or the dissing of The X Files, this is all unmissable stuff – even the Pope gets splatted this issue. And don't miss the back-up shorts including a wry comment on lame twist-ending strips. Highly recommended. (AL) 9

Hardly the Hog 4

by Coward & Coward; £2.25 from Jam-Up Comics PO Box 1466, Sheffield S3 9YA

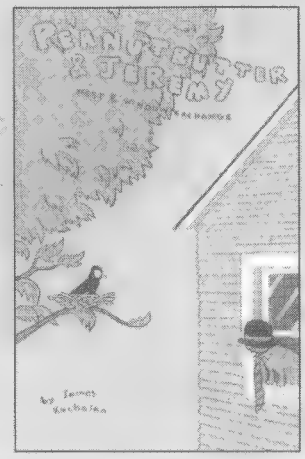
Chronicling the misadventures of an aloof, talking hog and his human companion,

Peanutbutter and Jeremy: Nest and Window Exchange

by Kochalka; Alternative Press

I pity my poor mate Dave who shelled out $2.95 for this dross. Where there are certain comics creators who dredge the bottom of the barrel, James Kochalka isn't even aware the barrel exists, indefatigably adding to his asinine body of work. Give it up James, for the sake of the rainforests. (JL) 1

<=> Kockalka continues to tell the tale of this odd couple, Jeremy the incensed crow, and Peanutbutter the gentle kitty, as they argue over her bowler hat. The simplistic felt-tip style art may not be to all tastes, but it has a cute charm that belies the comic's ageless appeal. (MAT) 7



Detective Merton, this ambitiously produced title perhaps owes a tiny debt to Dave Sim's Cerebus. However, the script's wry humour and light social observation, allied to the dark and dreamlike visuals, create a moody charm that makes the lapses in both the lettering's clarity and the storytelling's effectiveness almost forgiveable. (JE) 7

Mustard 3

by various; www.mustardmag.org

As you might expect in a humour mag with over a dozen contributors the quality of what's on offer varies. However when it's good it's very good indeed with features such as *Save the Goth*, *Catholic Reward Cards* and *Postal Twister*. Editor Alex Musson's contributions are particularly entertaining, such as the laugh-out-loud personal ads. Also impressive is *The Other Side*, a short strip by Art Wyatt and Mike Donaldson. Also this issue an interview with the Comedy Store Players and a look at Too-Much-Coffee Man. (AL) 7

Nucomix 5

by various; £1.50 from S. Bowland
7 Waterside Close, Madeley
Cheshire CW3 9TH

Simon Bowland's on-going anthology title continues apace. It's nice to see John Doran's artwork becoming bolder and more confident in *Activist*. Bowland himself teams up with skilled artist Faiz Rehman this issue in the self-contained *Crying Wolf*, a jaunty consideration of the startling lengths a journo hack might go to in furthering his career. (AL) 7

Rainbows Don't Have Black

by Duff; £1.50 from M. Duff
24 Belmont Gardens
Edinburgh EH12 6JH

The latest release from Malcy Duff features a diminutive protagonist pitted against the heavy hand of progress. An almost wordless vignette from the man who defies classification, a comic like this takes on alternative meanings with further readings. Finely crafted and skilfully paced, as with all Malcy's titles, this will haunt you long after reading. (AL) 8

Second Coming

by Oakes; 70p from B. Oakes
65 South Grove, Sale
Manchester M33 3AR

Ben Oakes writes and draws this piece of irreverent fun. If you're amused by the thought of Jesus as a super-hero, camp transvestite angels and the Devil as a Nietzschean philosopher then you'll enjoy this. Just don't go lending your copy to the vicar. (AL) 6

Stupid Monsters 4

by Northfield; £3 from G. Northfield
6 Foxberry Court, Foxberry Road
Brockley, London SE4 2SQ

Existing readers will be familiar with Garry Northfield's efforts to make this series visually individualistic. This issue, subtitled *The Monster who Enjoyed his Dreams*, is a deceptively simple full-colour pocket-sized volume which ruminates on the loss of childhood innocence, as felt through each different sense by the protagonist. The comics equivalent of Louis MacNeice's poem *Soap Suds* surely? (AL) 7

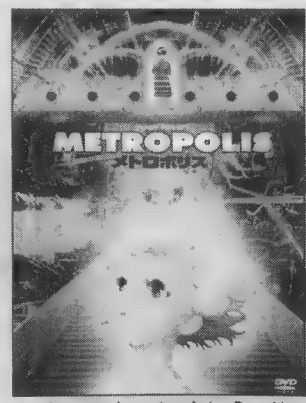
Zip Gun Presents: Noir

by various; £1 from D. Goodman
34 Banner Street, Wavertree
Liverpool L15 0HR

As its title suggest this anthology showcases a selection of dark crime shorts. With impressive art by the likes of editor Dave Goodman and Iain Buchanan, it packs a fair few punches. Also impressive is John Bishop's cynical twist-ended *Business as Usual*. (AL) 7

Metropolis

directed by Otomo + Rintaro, based on the manga by Tezuka; Certificate PG; 104 mins
VHS: £9.99 DVD: £19.99



Japan's 'god of manga' Osamu Tezuka was 23 and had never watched Fritz Lang's landmark science fiction movie when he created his 1949 160-page manga of the same name. All he had seen of it was one magazine photo of the famous scene of the woman robot's creation. From that he wove his own futuristic vision of the dangers of technology, a timely warning only a few years after the atomic bombings of his country. In many ways, his robot girl who believes she is human was a prototype for his most famous character, Astro Boy. Now 50 years later, Katsuhiro Otomo, creator of the breakthrough *Akira* manga and film, and former Tezuka collaborator and *Galaxy Express 999* director Rintaro have combined to adapt Tezuka's manga into a very different-looking retro-future anime movie. They've pioneered a hybrid of the old-style charm of painted-cel character animation, inspired by Tezuka's love of vintage Fleischer Brothers cartoons, fused with the latest cutting-edge CGI environments, on palatial 1920s-style marble and mosaic decors and glistening metallic machinery. Though they have changed Tezuka's story, in some ways making it closer to Lang's themes, at its heart remains the robot girl Tima, built for Duke Red to replace his lost daughter and to become his world-controlling super-being. Rescued and befriended by young Kenichi, she becomes a pawn in the power struggle between the elites in the city's soaring skyscrapers and the revolutionaries and robots kept down in its lower levels. Otomo has added a vital new character, the Duke's adopted but unloved son Rock (actually a Tezuka lead from another manga), whose jealousy and volatility drive him to rebel and destroy Tima. If, like me, you blinked and missed this film's very limited 'release' here in February, you can now catch it on video and on DVD with behind-the-scenes interviews and features on a bonus disc. Putting Tezuka, Otomo and Rintaro together generates some of the most richly-textured and thought-provoking science fiction Japanimation since Akira. (PG) 9

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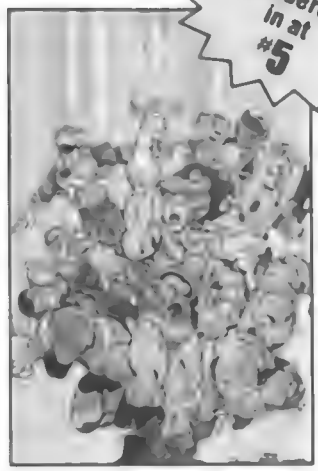
Comics Economics

The Top 100 US comicbook sales for August 2002



Rank	Prior	Title, Issue, Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(32)	**Fantastic Four** #60 $0.09 (705,109)	Marvel
2	(2)	**Transformers: Generation One** #5 $2.95 (122,829)	DreamWave
3	(5)	**Ultimates** #8 $2.25 (112,570)	Marvel
4	(1)	**Transformers: Armada** #2 $2.95 (109,532)	DreamWave
5	(N)	**Thundercats: Reclaiming Thundera** #1 $2.95 (101,551)	WildStorm
6	(7)	**Amazing Spider-Man** #44 $2.25 (100,070)	Marvel
7	(6)	**Spider-Man/Black Cat: Evil That Men Do** #3 $2.99 (99,110)	Marvel
8	(9)	**New X-Men** #131 $2.25 (98,805)	Marvel
9	(=)	**New X-Men** #130 $2.25 (98,796)	Marvel
10	(N)	**Thundercats** #0 $2.50 (96,745)	DC/WildStorm
11	(10)	**Ultimate Spider-Man** #25 $2.25 (96,382)	Marvel
12	(9)	**Ultimate X-Men** #21 $2.25 (93,216)	Marvel
13	(12)	**Uncanny X-Men** #410 $2.25 (87,008)	Marvel
14	(13)	**Uncanny X-Men** #411 $2.25 (86,875)	Marvel
15	(3)	**Battle of the Planets** #2 $2.99 (71,982)	Image
16	(13)	**Spider-Man: Blue** #4 $3.50 (70,293)	Marvel Knights
17	(14)	**Wolverine** #180 $2.25 (67,892)	Marvel
18	(17)	**X-Treme X-Men** #17 $2.99 (64,961)	Marvel
19	(18)	**Captain America** #5 $2.99 (64,695)	Marvel Knights
20	(19)	**GI Joe** #9 $2.95 (64,602)	Image
21	(20)	**JLA** #69 $2.25 (62,677)	DC Comics
22	(21)	**Peter Parker, Spider-Man** #47 $2.25 (62,157)	Marvel
23	(N)	**Spider-Man/Daredevil** #1 $2.99 (61,680)	Marvel
24	(21)	**JLA** #70 $2.25 (61,566)	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000			
25	(15)	**Green Arrow** #16 $2.50 (59,946)	DC Comics
26	(23)	**Avengers** #57 $2.25 (55,921)	Marvel
27	(25)	**Daredevil** #36 $2.99 (50,210)	Marvel Knights
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000			
28	(27)	**Incredible Hulk** #44 $2.25 (49,184)	Marvel
29	(24)	**League of Extraordinary Gentlemen vol 2** #2 $3.50 (47,203)	DC/ABC
30	(29)	**Punisher** #15 $2.99 (44,501)	Marvel Knights
31	(22)	**Batman** #606 $2.25 (44,218)	DC Comics
32	(31)	**Fantastic Four** #59 $2.25 (43,378)	Marvel
33	(N)	**Call of Duty: Wagon** #1 $2.25 (43,258)	Marvel
34	(30)	**JSA** #39 $2.50 (43,024)	DC Comics
35	(26)	**Detective Comics** #773 $2.75 (42,436)	DC Comics
36	(39)	**Rising Stars** #21 $2.99 (41,879)	Top Cow/Joe's Comics
37	(33)	**Spawn** #125 $2.50 (41,251)	Image/TMP
38	(28)	**X-Statix** #2 $2.25 (41,140)	Marvel
39	(60)	**Call of Duty: Brotherhood** #3 $2.25 (40,176)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000			
40	(57)	**Call of Duty: Precinct** #2 $2.25 (39,823)	Marvel
41	(35)	**Exiles** #16 $2.25 (39,133)	Marvel
42	(N)	**Weapon X: Wild Child** #1 $2.25 (38,797)	Marvel
43	(N)	**Weapon X: Agent Zero** #1 $2.25 (38,739)	Marvel
44	(N)	**Weapon X: Marrow** #1 $2.25 (37,966)	Marvel
45	(37)	**Green Lantern** #153 $2.25 (37,864)	DC Comics
46	(N)	**Weapon X: Kane** #1 $2.25 (37,718)	Marvel
47	(N)	**Weapon X: Sauron** #1 $2.25 (37,669)	Marvel
48	(34)	**Hawkman** #6 $2.50 (37,387)	DC Comics
49	(40)	**Thor** #52 $2.25 (36,902)	Marvel
50	(49)	**Thor** #53 $2.25 (36,701)	Marvel
51	(36)	**Superman** #185 $2.25 (36,661)	DC Comics
52	(42)	**Iron Man** #58 $2.25 (36,051)	Marvel
53	(58)	**Micronauts** #2 $2.95 (35,547)	Image
54	(44)	**Batgirl** #31 $2.50 (35,144)	DC Comics
55	(32)	**Batman: Gotham Knights** #32 $2.75 (34,565)	DC Comics
56	(43)	**Paradise X** #5 $2.99 (34,357)	Marvel
57	(47)	**Nightwing** #72 $2.25 (33,420)	DC Comics
58	(48)	**Action Comics** #794 $2.25 (32,651)	DC Comics
59	(38)	**Agent X** #2 $2.25 (32,531)	Marvel
60	(54)	**Infinity Abyss** #5 $2.99 (32,345)	Marvel
61	(00)	**Infinity Abyss** #6 $3.50 (32,200)	Marvel
62	(49)	**Adnetures of Superman** #607 $2.25 (32,098)	DC Comics
63	(N)	**Authority Kev** $4.95 (31,625)	DC/WildStorm
64	(46)	**Spider-Man: Quality of Life** #4 $2.99 (31,620)	Marvel
65	(50)	**Spider-Man: Get Kraven** #3 $2.25 (30,913)	Marvel
66	(51)	**Superman: Man of Steel** #129 $2.25 (30,864)	DC Comics
67	(41)	**Soldier X** #2 $2.25 (30,661)	Marvel
68	(65)	**GI Joe: Battle Files** #3 $5.95 (30,267)	Image
69	(57)	**Elektra** #13 $2.99 (30,236)	Marvel Knights
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000			
70	(N)	**X-Men: Icons Chamber** #1 $2.99 (29,794)	Marvel
71	(55)	**X-Factor** #4 $2.50 (29,701)	Marvel
72	(62)	**Flash** #189 $2.25 (29,591)	DC Comics
73	(59)	**Alias** #13 $2.99 (29,546)	Marvel/MAX Comics
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77	(66)	**Thunderbolts** #69 $2.25 (28,070)	Marvel
78	(63)	**Catwoman** #10 $2.50 (27,937)	DC Comics
79	(69)	**Batman: Legends o/t Dark Knight** #158 $2.50 (27,933)	DC
80	(72)	**Tangled Web** #17 $2.99 (26,991)	Marvel
81	(72)	**Birds of Prey** #46 $2.50 (26,867)	DC Comics
82	(N)	**Avengers: Icons Vision** #1 $2.99 (26,823)	Marvel
83	(71)	**Powers** #24 $2.95 (26,644)	Image
84	(80)	**Filth** #3 $2.95 (26,522)	DC/Vertigo
85	(83)	**Spider-Girl** #50 $3.50 (26,420)	Marvel
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87	(82)	**Witchblade** #58 $2.50 (26,151)	Image/Top Cow
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96	(N)	**Hawkman: Secret Files** #1 $4.95 (23,038)	DC Comics
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98	(81)	**Marvel Mangaverse** #5 $2.25 (22,852)	Marvel
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Movers & Shakers

The latest comicbook views, speculations, gossip and rumours

Reported by those diggers and delvers ITMA and the CI team of ITMites

Lost in Space?

ACCORDING to Warren Ellis, the long-overdue **Ministry of Space** #3 (of 3) is "on the way".

Despite the fact that the book's artist Chris Weston is now beavering away on Grant Morrison's **The Filth** over at Vertigo, Ellis states he is splitting his time between the two titles and promises to announce a release date as soon as it's complete.

Talking of lost projects, Ellis has also offered an update on fan-fave **Planetary**, despite that title's artist – John Cassaday – having taken on the high profile **Captain America** relaunch. He says Cassaday will be freed up later this year and be ready to complete #16, with Ellis having already scripted 80 pages of further issues. Proving the point, he adds, "In **Planetary** #19, we finally meet Jacob Greene from The Four, and things get really nasty. #16 is so far along that, back at the start of the year, I thought we were ready to go to solicitation, but I had a dozen other things on my mind. Anyway, we've got a head start on the restart because of John's diligence, and are talking new publication schedules right now."

In the meantime, here's an appetite-whetter in one of Cassaday's Elijah Snow character sketches.

Court's in session...

IT'S ALMOST upon us, possibly the highest profile comics court case since the Superman vs Captain Marvel fiasco of the '40s.

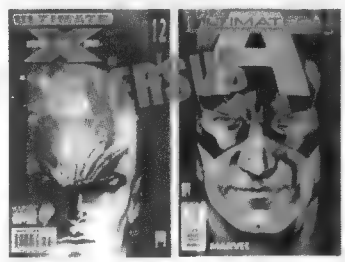
The jury selection in the Neil Gaiman vs Todd McFarlane affair over ownership of Miracleman starts on September 28 with the trial beginning on October 2. You can almost imagine the lawyers grilling the potential jurors on this one. "Have you ever owned a McFarlane toy or enjoyed **Spawn**, sir? You have? Sorry, judge, he'll have to step down. We've got a biased juror here!"

*COMICS FANS DISCOVER WOMEN. Risking a potential slump in comics buying, the New York comics fraternity was encouraged to pay $10 a head for a lapdance as part of Jimmy Palmiotti and Amanda O'Connor's charity launch for their new Image title, **Pro**. With $5 going to the working girl, the other 50% was donated to the Comicbook Legal Defense Fund. Proving either their altruistic natures, or that they knew value for money, lapdance recipients donated a total of $2000 to the charity.*

And in this corner...

A FAR more interesting battle is also set for this winter, albeit a totally fictitious one. It's hardly surprising that – given their runaway success – Marvel's mightiest two new supergroups are to have a set-to.

Ultimate X-Men versus the Ultimates is shipping as a December limited series written by Mark Millar and drawn by Chris Bachalo. "Goodbye, Transformers. I hope you've enjoyed your stay at #1," quipped young Millar.



Speed Air Man

IN THE latest **Creative Review** there's an interview with David Belle, the topless Frenchman who leaps across London buildings in the advert for the BBC.

This, apparently, is the extreme sport of *Parkour*. Belle says; "Spider-Man was a big influence. I have made a film , a personal project called *Speed Air Man*, in homage to the comic character."

For those whose stairs don't quite make it to the attic, Speed Air is the French pronunciation of spider. This could start a trend; watch out for Campbell Kent next as Soup Air Man!

To be continued...

STICKING with the French flavour and throwing in the earlier court theme, a bizarre precedent has been set in the land of bayday.

A European court has ordered a cartoonist to finish a graphic novel or pay 1000 euros (around £700) a day to his contracted publisher.

François Bourgeon, creator of such popular titles as **Passengers of the Wind**, **Companions of the Twilight** and **The Cycle of Cyann** stopped work on the final Cyann volume in protest over the sale of his publisher, Casterman to Flammarian. The secret sale last Autumn drew widespread and bitter criticism from European authors, with Bourgeon laying down his pen in protest.

The new owners of **A Suivre** went to court and won, with Bourgeon being told he must finish the third album on time, or pay the fine. "I cannot work with a rifle in the back, impossible," he said.

So this could be the first time a publisher makes money by an artist missing his deadline!

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OPENS MIDDAY

Letters

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Spider-Girl

Richard Domar
9 Highlands Road
Wolverhampton WV3 8AH

TALK about power of the press; ie **CI** and my moans about the kidnapped baby plot never being resolved. **Spider-Girl** is finally telling us what happened. Thank goodness for that.

So, let's try another moan. Aunt May. She's well past her sell-by date and should have been tagged, bagged and planted long ago.

Who?

Bruce Paley, Crouch End, London

IT'S obvious Mike Conroy's no fan of the Who, judging by his last column *(Frame to Frame,* **CI** #149). Or is "Pete Entwistle" the secret love child of Pete Townshend and John Entwistle?

Danny who?

Dylan Parkin via e-mail:
bagosh.ite@dhmail.net

HOW interesting to read in the latest *Frame to Frame* (CI #149) that actor Nicolas Cage has changed tack, and is now angling for the role of "mainstay Pete Entwistle" in a proposed Who biopic. Would this be the "Pete Entwistle" who wrote *Magic Bike*, *Subbuteo Wizard*, *My Regeneration* and so many more? And will the film appear under the production aegis of the Amalgam Line?

Meanwhile, uncomplaining full-witted contributor Jae Leitch penned a piece several months back devoted to the "leper genre" of comics. A search for examples has yielded a singular result, a 1968 three-parter in **Action Comics** wherein Superman becomes *The Leper From Krypton*. It would appear that the genre is a fabrication, and its association with sexual harassment in the workplace a sensationalist charade concocted by the author. (NB: Comics is a medium, not a genre!)

Thoughts and stuff

Jay Bonney via e-mail:
jay787@aol.com

CI #149 was as entertaining as usual, and for the second month running included a sizeable amount of small press reviews! As a sometime contributor to the small press community I feel **CI** should be applauded, thanked, and generally have nice things thrown in its direction for its continued support of the small press.

The remainder of the magazine appears to have gone from strength to strength in recent months. The inclusion of *Novel Graphics* has been a welcome one, and *Frame to Frame* appears to have gone through some changes, but all for the better.

With #150 approaching just over the horizon, are there any plans for other new features, maybe something highlighting characters' key events and publishing history? A sort of *Who's Who*, but with the focus as much on the original creators as on the characters themselves, charting their careers, high points and low points and so on (Batman and Bob Kane, anybody?).

We did think of doubling the price and adding 8 extra pages to celebrate #150, in the time-honoured fleece the fans comics tradition, but decided against it. So it's just business as usual this month.

With regard to new features, we were both inundated and overwhelmed by the input readers gave in response to our recent survey. The only problem is that the response was so fantastic (well over 800 entries) that we're still wading through them to analyse the results.

So far, it looks like the majority of you would like to see more on British comics history (we're working on it), with interviews coming a close second (ditto) and you're not too bothered about price guides (whew!).

The results of the how many comics do you buy, how long have you been a fan and such questions are quite alarming, so we intend to give the results the amount of space they truly deserve as this appears to have been the most comprehensive industry survey done in many a year. ...Dez

Noble thoughts

David Savage via e-mail:
davidsavage@supanet.com

THANKS for answering my Mike Noble query in the current issue – it was nice to see that Lew Stringer is a big admirer of Noble's work too. (And, as for me, I guess I'll continue buying those old **Look-Ins** at £5 a piece!)

Thanks again for answering the query. Excellent magazine.

The retail voice

Mark Pond via e-mail:
markpondy@hotmail.com

I HAVE a suggestion regarding the content of **CI**. How about a monthly feature that basically allows retailers on a national and international basis the opportunity to express their views on the positive to negative aspects of the industry, ranging from their views on readers, and what readers want from the titles they collect and the service provided, to their views on publishers and creators and so on.

Obviously, the questions asked would need to be refined, although once the content is decided upon a standard questionnaire could be distributed and a different retailer featured each month (an optional photo of the shop/staff would also be an idea).

...And we could call the column ComicWatch, *Mark, like we used to many years ago. Yes, been there, done that, Mark. But instead of singling out a different retailer each month, we ran surveys with topical questions and around 20 replies to each. Would love to restart the column, it's simply a matter of finding both the time and the space.*

But rest assured it will happen. We're looking to boost our team (see our ad elsewhere this issue) so hopefully you won't have to wait too long.

Once Upon a Time the Super Heroes

David E. Wiggins via e-mail:
davidwiggins@amserve.com

IF I may, I'd like to plug a really excellent DVD which I purchased recently. *Spider-Man, Once Upon a Time the Super Heroes* is two hours and 50 minutes of sheer bliss and encapsulates the history of the genre from the war years up to the present day.

What I loved about this gem was the numerous talks by comic-book legends, including Stan Lee, John Romita, Neal Adams, the late John Buscema, Carmine Infantino, Dave Gibbons and Jim Lee to name but a few. There's also a superb in-depth section on the work of the great Jack Kirby, plus a plethora of stills and anecdotes from the Mighty Marvel Bullpen itself.

I cannot recommend this DVD enough, and at just £4.99 it's an unbelievable bargain for anyone interested in the industry and its origins. Top Notch!

That IPC/AOL deal

David McDonald
Cappagh, Castlebar
Co. Mayo, Ireland

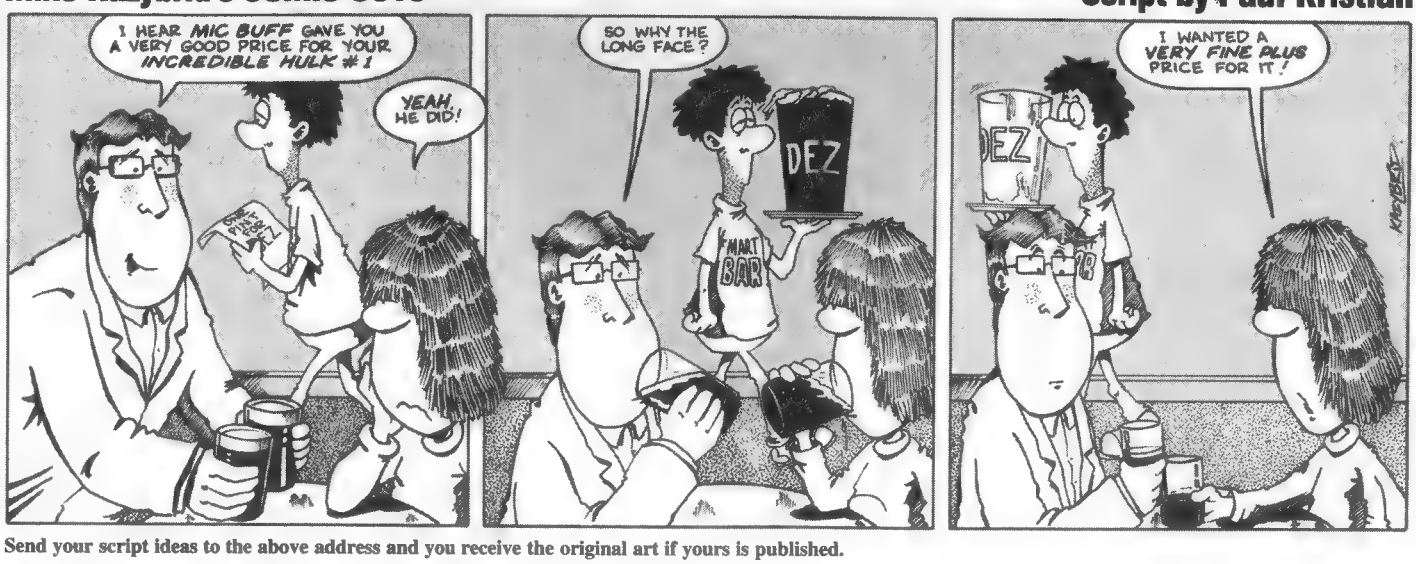
SINCE Johnny Red, the Steel Claw, Robot Archie, Rick Random, Kelly's Eye and Adam Eterno have all appeared in **2000 AD**, however briefly, does that give Rebellion the right to the characters and the back catalogue of stories?

And how can DC object to IPC comic characters being used? I presumed IPC sold their entire comics line on, now in the hands of Egmont.

No, Egmont only took those they considered

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS

Script by Paul Kristian


I HEAR MIC BUFF GAVE YOU A VERY GOOD PRICE FOR YOUR INCREDIBLE HULK #1
YEAH, HE DID!
SO WHY THE LONG FACE?
DEZ
I WANTED A VERY FINE PLUS PRICE FOR IT!

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

Please note: All scripts are submitted on the understanding they become the copyright property of Kazybrid, Skinn and Comics International.

viable (ie: still being published at the time). And our mention to DC's indirect ownership appears to have created a twinkle in the eye of WildStorm's editor in chief Scott Dunbier who is rumoured to be reviving some of them. Which is not that surprising when you consider Scott's first job in comics was slaving away for me in a King's Road basement, resizing old IPC pages for reprinting as US titles, alongside Peter Hogan and Dave Elliott, also then new to the industry.

As well as 2000 AD reprints, we put out four Steel Claw issues, revamped Cursitor Doom for Spellbinders as Amadeus Wolf and did quite a bit of work on Johnny Future, The Iron Man, Maxwell Hawke, The Spider and a host of others before moving on to pastures new.

Who does own the old IPC characters?

David Bishop via e-mail

RE *LETTERS* in **CI** #148: DC does, indeed, have theoretical access to many old IPC characters through AOL Time Warner's acquisition of IPC.

This very subject came up when I interviewed former IPC, Fleetway and Egmont Fleetway managing editor Gil Page recently for the history of **2000 AD** that I have been researching and writing.

Here's what Gil had to say on the subject: "When Maxwell bought the comics division, we thought he'd bought everything back to 1888, when Amalgamated Press was formed. In fact, he bought only those titles and the characters in them published from the formation of IPC, which was in 1969. That was with the exception of **The Eagle** (1950, relaunched 1983), *Roy of the Rovers* (published in **Tiger** from 1954, given his own title in 1977) and **Buster** – because all those titles were running when Maxwell came along and acquired the group. Those three exceptions were from pre-'69, plus he bought everything that was running or launched from '69. But everything before that still belongs to IPC.

"What muddied the waters was that we didn't know who owned what; it took a long time to sort it out. Certainly Alan McKenzie did a special with **2000 AD** on it. It had The Steel Claw and others in – that all belonged to IPC. He didn't check it out, he just did it. We didn't know at the time. It was only when we got to Tavistock Place... We continued to talk and argue with IPC about who owned what because the contract of sale between the two companies was so terrible. People never checked it out; they just went ahead and did it. It wasn't altogether Alan's fault."

Now, the **2000 AD Action Special** mentioned by Peter Hogan in **CI** #148 was published in March 1992, six months before Egmont Fleetway moved to Tavistock Place. From what Gil says, the final agreement on who owned what did not take place for some months after that move.

This explains why Kelly's Eye appeared in a *Universal Soldier* story in **2000 AD** Progs 750-759 (September - November 1991) and then in his own serial in Progs 821-830 (February - April 1993). Both those stories and the **Action Special** were, unwittingly, infringements of IPC's copyright.

The upshot of all that: don't expect to see any of those characters anywhere anytime soon.

Take an old UK comics character, add a new publisher, throw in America and what do you get? Instant confusion and large legal bills. Anyone for Marvelman?

Brother Matthew

"Mad" Steven Morrell
881 Barnsley Rd, Sheffield Lane Top, Sheffield S5 0QJ

Please kill the *Brother Matthew* strip. Nice art, shite subject. I remember what the Catholic church put Giordano Bruno and Galileo Galilei through.

Anything that even suggests that the Inquisition were good guys has got to be a bit dodgy!

Hence each issue me running the line of copy in the intro page "Already he begins to doubt the wisdom of the Church"

Captain Midnight questions

Karen Lee (Hukkala) Gould, Montgomery Village, MD

I AM the daughter of a Chicago artist/illustrator, Gabriel John Hukkala, who worked at the **Chicago Herald-Examiner** in the 1930s, the **Chicago Sun** in the 1940s and the **Chicago Daily News** until five years before his death in 1963.

I noticed you ran an answer to a reader's letter recently from John Miller of Edinburgh. You stated "That same year (1942) the Captain Midnight daily and Sunday newspaper strips debuted, lasting until 1945. Credited to Jonwan, they was mainly the work of Winterbotham and Hess although Henry E. Vallely sometimes did art assists."

Actually, my father drew the Captain Midnight comic strip for (at least) a period in 1944. I have some of the original comic strips, "copyright 1944 by The Chicago Sun Syndicate".

Perhaps the word "mainly" takes into account that other artists may have done work too.

Whatever happened to... Dick Domar?

Richard Domar
9 Highlands Road
Wolverhampton WV3 8AH

IN **CI** #144 TIM Barnes asked if you'd consider doing a 'Whatever happened to..?' feature. You didn't give much of an answer.

I think many of the people who were involved in fandom back in the '70s and '80s were mostly as letter hacks, only involved for a short time. A passing fad for many. While they collected and read comics, fandom was an additional entertainment, and it was always spoilt by people starting up a new fanzine, taking subscriptions and not supplying all the issues you paid for. Is this the "murky" Tim's looking for? I'm still waiting for an issue of **Cerebro** I paid for.

All the rip-offs made things harder for anyone trying to do any kind of fanzine, and I don't remember any other 'zine trying to honour its obligations. At least in my 27-issues run of **The Owl's Effort** (June 1979 to October 1984) I didn't cheat anybody. I probably upset everyone at one time or another, but I didn't con them, and if any contributors are still around today expecting an apology, no chance of that.

So, whatever happened to me when I quit reading and collecting in around '84 or '85? Simple. I continued my other hobby of buying and selling Northern Soul singles to become a full-time dealer in 1987. This had been financed by my selling my entire comics collection, which at the time was the second best in the UK. Only Martin Lock had a better collection.

16 years later, I now work about 20 hours over three days per week, sometimes more when sorting new stock, and enjoy a very high standard of living. I love the music too, which I discovered almost at the same time as comics, back in around 1973.

Sometimes I regret selling the first few issues of all the Marvel characters – Spidey, FF, X-Men, Avengers, Hulk, etc – because of how expensive they are today. I could have kept the first 10 or 20 of each, but I never expected to ever return to reading them, and it was all about selling the lot and going into another venture.

Funny books or crypto-high art?

W. Smith
Stamford, Lincolnshire

I'M AFRAID I don't manage to catch all your issues nowadays, but I thought #148 was brilliant!

It kicked off with Dez pointing out that comics are only "funny books", and finished with somebody foaming at the mouth because some highbrow arty farty critics couldn't be bothered to penetrate comics' hidden depths. Maybe it's because they think they're just funny books!

Funny books or crypto-high art? Possibly both and more.

"Some comics are crap and some are great." It all boils down to personal opinion. But every time somebody from 'the outside' criticises something about them, for some reason it seems the entire industry – and every single comic ever published – needs to be defended like a single, vast and very precious toy.

That doesn't generally seem to be the case when somebody says a film is poor, or that a book is rubbish. Perhaps it would make the comics industry appear slightly less inbred and homogenous if, when some comics are held up as "good", we rejoice! Similarly, to sell copy, if some comics are criticised for being misogynistic, jingoistic, doused in cliche and saccharine sentimentality, racist or pandering to adolescent male redneck tendencies (or maybe that's genuinely held preaching of the right path?) it's understood, accepted and sometimes even celebrated that comics can be all those things as well. At least that's what Garth Ennis seems to do, but maybe he's a freak.

On reflection, though, perhaps there just aren't enough publishers, and those who dominate and control the industry are far too wanky and censorious to ever consciously do that. But it is very sad when some comics are those things and some people, particularly the writers, don't even realise it.

By the way, if the second series turns out anything like the first collection, I'd like to recommend **League of Extraordinary Gentlemen** as jolly good fun.

CI newsgroup

Jason Morden
Wilmcote House, Tylesley Road, Somerston, Southsea, Hants

I'VE been out of touch for the last year, having worked abroad, but I'm quickly getting back up to speed on what's happening in comics though your august organ.

I see you've also been giving the magazine quite a facelift. I approve. Adding Paul Gravett to your team is inspired, especially letting him loose on graphic novels. I also love the *Brother Matthew* strip (any chance of a collected version when it finishes?) and Jim Hannah's comics-to-film round-up is a useful summary. Adding a working retailer to your team, through Biff Averre's *Illuminations* is a good idea too.

I see you've dropped the **CI** online chat room summary for Rich Johnston's *In the Gutter* gossip column. Another good move. Much as I liked some comments made in the former, it seemed like an old pals' act, with the same names coming up all the time and not really worth the space.

But what happened to your message board? I went online to it and found it had only one member and said it started in June this year. What gives?

The group should have two members now. I've just applied to join and can't wait for my membership to be approved so I can see the one message posted there! So thanks for bringing the subject up, Jason.

The last we were told the moderators ran a poll about it being named after a magazine it no longer had any connection with and, despite the overwhelmingly favourable response not to change it, the group's name evolved into Comics Unintentional and presumably went elsewhere. But as we're apparently barred (the shame, the shame) I've no idea what it's like. So if you join, be sure to let us know what we're missing.

Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel ..... www.artbabe.com
Kyle Baker ..... www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale ..... www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art ..... www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright ..... www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell ..... www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday ..... www.johncassaday.com
Chuck Dixon ..... www.dixonverse.com
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Warren Ellis ..... www.warrenellis.com
Phil Foglio ..... www.studiofoglio.com
John Layman ... hometown.aol.com/dickduck/friendship.htm
Bob Layton ..... www.boblayton.com
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Joseph Michael Linsner ..... www.linsner.com
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Mike Mignola (official fan site) ..... www.hellboy.com
Grant Morrison ..... www.grant-morrison.com
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..... www.geocities.com/romitapage/home.htm
Alex Ross Art ..... www.alexrossart.com
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Chaos! ..... www.chaoscomics.com
Cool Beans World ..... www.coolbeansworld.com
Com.X ..... www.comxcomics.com
CrossGeneration Comics ..... www.crossgen.com
Crusade Entertainment ..... www.shiweb.com
Dark Horse ..... www.darkhorse.com
DC Comics ..... www.dccomics.com
Drawn and Quarterly ... www.drawnandquarterly.com
Dynamic Forces ..... www.dynamicforces.com
Fantagraphics ..... www.fantagraphics.com
Harris Comics ..... www.vampirella.com
Heavy Metal ..... www.heavymetal.com
Knockabout Comics ..... www.knockabout.com
Marvel Comics ..... www.marvel.com
Northern Lightz ..... www.northernlightz.com
Oni Press ..... www.onipress.com
Quality/Warrior ..... www.comicsinternational.com
Sirius Entertainment . www.sirius.choiceoneonline.com
Todd McFarlane Productions .... www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics ..... www.topcow.com
TwoMorrows ..... www.twomorrows.com
2000 AD www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA) ..... www.viz.com
Viz (UK) ..... www.viz.co.uk
WildStorm Comics ..... www.wildstorm.com

Manga and anime

AD Vision ..... www.advfilms.com
Bio-Techanism ..... www.bio-techanism.co.uk
MVM ..... www.mvm-uk.co.uk
United Publications www.up1.co.uk

On-line auctions

All Star Auctions ..... www.allstarauc.com
Amazon ..... www.amazon.com

COMIC BOOK POSTAL AUCTIONS
Ten successful years specialising in Golden & Silver Age, artwork and vintage UK comics
..... www.compalcomics.com

Comic Exchange ..... www.comicexchange.com
eBay ..... www.ebay.co.uk
Heritage Comic Auctions . www.heritagecomics.com
Mile High Comics ..... www.milehighcomics.com
Up 4 Sale www.up4sale.com/comicbooks.htm
Upper Bid ..... www.upperbid.com
Unlimitus ..... www.unlimitus.com/auction
West Coast Comics ..... www.westcoastcomics.com
Yahoo Auctions ..... auctions.yahoo.com

Festivals and fairs

Amadora Comics Festival ..... www.cm-amadora.pt
Angouleme BD (France) .... www.bdangouleme.com
Comic-Con International (San Diego, USA)
..... www.comic-con.org

COMICS 2003 (England)
THE UK'S OFFICIAL COMICS FESTIVAL
Commonwealth Museum, Bristol: 31/5-2/6
.....www.sitsvac.org

Lucca Comics (Italy) ..... www.comune.lucca.it
Megacon (Florida, USA) .. www.megaconvention.com

MEMORABILIA (Scotland & England)
BIRMINGHAM NEC, GLASGOW SECC & LONDON
THE UK'S BIGGEST FANTASY FAIRS
.....www.memorabilia.co.uk

Raptus International Comics Festival (Norway)
..... www.raptus.no
Scottish Comic, Card & Collectables Fair
..... e-mail:marts@ redhotcomics.demon.co.uk
Wizard World (Chicago, USA) .. www.comicmart.co.uk

New and back issue dealers

Ace Comics ..... www.acecomics.net
Avalon Comics ..... www.avaloncomics.co.uk
Black Dog Comics ..... www.blackdog-comics.com
Celestial Comics ..... www.celestialcomics.com

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Mighty World of Comicana . www.comicana.com

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SILVER ACRE COMICS
OVER 900,000 COMICS IN STOCK, 110,000 DIFFERENT ITEMS LISTED ONLINE
.....www.silveracre.com

Speeding Bullet . www.speedingbulletcomics.co.uk
Starstore/Last Picture Show ... www.starstore.com
Whatever Comics ..... www.whatevercomics.com
Wonderworld ..... www.wonderworld.uk.com

On-line comics companies:

*By popular demand, **CI** now runs an at-a-glance overview of the major sites for on-line comics collectors and creators. Have your company listed for only £5 (US $8) a month. Bookable in 6-issue blocks, companies wishing to be included should send £30 or US $40 (UK: please add £5.25 to cover VAT) with trading name and website address.*

♦ Major companies requiring bold and boxed entries should send £60 + £10.50 VAT per 6-issue series, US $80 (£10/$16 per issue) and may add three lines of descriptive copy. Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International and sent to:
Internet Listings, Comics International, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ
Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail details to: Listings@comicsinternational.com

Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines
ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0207924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 0207229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 0207434 4349

Forbidden Planet, 71-75 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG. Mon-Wed/Sat 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, film/TV) 0207836 4179

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Sun 10-6; (Thurs-Fri to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 0207636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Sun 10-6; (Thurs-Fri to 7) (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 0207485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 0207836 5630

Orbital, 9 Old Compton Street, London W1. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Star Wars) 0207434 9363

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 0208686 2400

Ashcan, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Mon-Wed/Fri 10.30-5.30; Thurs 10-7; Sat 9-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 0208770 3815

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs 10.30-6; Fri 10.30-6.30; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 0208597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6, (Thurs-Fri to 7); Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 0208427 3831

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; (Thurs to 7). (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi/fantasy books, videos) 0208688 7190

Into the Void, 262 Streatham High Road, Streatham SW16 1HS. Mon-Sat 9.30-7; Sun 11-3. (imp, back, STO, merch, toys) 0208677 7037

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Mon-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 0208801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

Skinny Melinks, 66 Loampit Vale, London SE13. Mon-Wed/Sat 11-6; Thurs-Fri 11-7; Sun 11-5 (50p sale on back issues under £3 Sat-Mon) 0208318 0499

They Walk Among Us, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 6); Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi/horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 0208788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics 2, 90 Queens Road, The Broadway, Watford WD1 2LA. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs/Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Chaos City, 20 Heritage Close, (off High Street), St Albans, Herts AL3 4EB. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri 10-7.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01727 838719

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comics Unlimited, Unit 11, The Arcade, Letchworth, Herts. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (closed Wed) (imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, videos, Games W/shop) 01462 480018

Comix-shop.co.uk, Nicholson Shopping Centre, Maidenhead SL6 1LB. Open two days only: Fri-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, toys)

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Daydream Nation Trading Cards at Hive, 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL. Mon-Sat 10-6 (CCGs, cards, sports, Ultra-Pro) 01273 687 877

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Into the Void, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Into the Void, 82 Upper Thames Walk, Bluewater, Kent DA9 9SR. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 9-8; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01322 427660

Into the Void, 61 Lower Ground Floor, Lakeside Shopping Centre, West Thurrock, Essex RM20 1WT. Mon-Fri 10-10; Sat 9-7.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, prl, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, art, statues) 01708 862675

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Phoenix Fantasy, 9 Market Street, Margate, Kent CT9 1EU. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch) 01843 224768

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand computer games) 01753 521594

Speeding Bullet Comics, 43 Hermitage Road, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1BY. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Wed 10-5); Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, STO, CCG, action figures, original artwork, life-size Spidey mannequin for hire) 01462 451117

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Another World, 42/43 Main Centre (opposite Wilkinsons) Derby. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30, Sat 9-5.30, Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film/TV memorabilia, computer games) 01332 206606

Another World, 23 Silver St, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 9-5.30, Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01162 515266

Another World, 11 Market Street, Nottingham. Mon-Fri 9-5.30, Sat 9.30-5.30, Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01159 484122

Another World, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30, Sat 9-5.30, Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381 Mail Order: 271750

Another World, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 9-5.30, Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (Thurs to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi/horror) 02476 229672

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, videos) 0115 958 4706

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Into the Void, 24 Mill Lane Arcade, Touchwood, Solihull B91 3GS. Mon-Fri 9.30-6, Sat 9-6, Sun 11-5 (imp, gn, tpbk, prl, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, art, statues) tel/fax: 0121 705 9080

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45, Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, merch, videos) 07796 854644

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi/horror books) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30, Sun 12-5 (2 floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Wed closed; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Moonwalk Collectables, 88 Oldham St, Manchester M4 1LF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, merch, Star Wars & Dr Who specialist, TV/film, British titles) 0161 907 3245

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool FY4 1DW. Mon, Tues, Thurs-Sat (Sun June-Oct inc) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Fri 10-7) (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 01132 426325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs until 7) (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror mags, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

Galaxy 4, 493 Glossop Road, Broomhill, Sheffield S10 2QE. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Doctor Who/Star Wars specialists, TV, paperbacks) 0114 268 4976

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Sat 10-5 (Wed closed) (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR.

Mon-Thurs 10-5.30, Fri-Sat 9-5.30, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01132427227

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904628787

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225424881

Area 51, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5, (Wed closed), Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452410232

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 7), Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 6), Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 02380230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed) Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 02392422731

Into the Void, 11 Rodbourne Road, Swindon SN2 2AG. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, CCG, merch) 01793434363

NEW **Kaboom**, 65 High Street, Totnes, Devon TQ10 9PU. (new, back, action figures, t-shirts, board games, RPG, import computer games, mail order) 01803863049

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752257800

Kernow Comix & Kollectables, (opposite Kazbah Bar) Quay Street, Truro, Cornwall TR1 2HB. Mon-Sat 10-5 (back, gn, tpbk, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch, film/TV fantasy, manga, toys, action figures, UK comics/annuals) 01872279805

Mondo Comics, 265 Commercial Road, Portsmouth PO4 0AB (round the corner from Sainsbury's). Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, merch) 02392851820

Paradox Comics, 30 Hill Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1NR. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202661346

Pipe dre@ms, 11-12 Riverside Level, The Mill Shopping Experience, Trowbridge, Wilts. Mon/Wed 10.30-3.30, Tues/Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, toys, art, wants) 07812773081

Purple Haze, 38 Eastlake Walk, Drakes Circus Shopping Centre, Plymouth, Devon PL1 1BX. Mon-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film, TV, sci-fi/horror/genre books, videos, Star Trek/Wars, cassettes/CDs) 01752254136

Wonderworld, 540 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth BH1 4BE. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, Star Wars/Trek, film/TV/media, beanie babies) 01202394918 or 393613

Wales

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (eves)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi/fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 20228885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 11 years) 01633222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5BZ. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Mon and Thurs to 8); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382221037

MOVED **City Centre Comics**, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Fri 10-6 (Thurs until 7); Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30, Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan St, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30, Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling, Fife FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786447687

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Sat 10-5 (Thurs to 6), Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) tel/fax: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Sat 11.30-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 47 Winetavern Street, Belfast BT1 1JQ Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 02890438744

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Rd, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Blvd, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) t/f: (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Blvd, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) tel/fax: (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back, S/Age) tel/fax: (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Blvd, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch) (00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258 (fax: 9299)

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) t/f: (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Blvd, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Ave, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292 (fax: 2188)

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Ave, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak St, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art, GW) (00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, White Wolf, manga, tpbk) (00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (New, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPI associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth St, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back, S/G Age)(00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Blvd, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main St, Murfreesboro TN 37130. Open 7 days a week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open 7 days a week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry St, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, t/cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Blvd, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl) (00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Rd, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540 (fax: 5637)

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651 (fax: 328-1355)

Direct Market Retailers:

***Comics International**'s Retail Index is THE international retail reference source for collectors, creators, publishers and journalists. Through it you can reach over 40,000 dedicated readers each issue for only £6 (US $10) a month! Bookable in 6-issue blocks, retailers wishing to be included should send US $60 or £36 (UK: please add £6.30 to cover VAT @ 17.5%) plus shop information as detailed on previous page to:*

Retail Index, Comics International, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ, England

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: Listings@comicsinternational.com

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG, sci-fi/fantasy, models) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, manga, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch, non-sport cards) (0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back, 2000 AD, sci-fi books) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, manga, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, manga, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, manga, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, books, merch, manga, RPG, action figures, models) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, manga, RPG, action figures, models) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, manga, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, manga, gn, CCG, foreign, cards) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG, cards) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (cards) (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG) (0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch, manga, film/TV) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, cards, toys, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, manga, gn, CCG, merch, t/cards) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, manga, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, manga, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, t/cards, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

NEW **The 3rd Place**, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, t/cards, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, t/cards, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, trading cards, merch) (0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, manga, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch, t/cards) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, Euro, manga, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and manga, RPG, CCG, t/cards) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, toys, videos, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, manga, CCG, merch)(00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, manga, CCG, merch)(00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, manga, CCG, toys, merch, sci-fi) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, manga, gn, CCG, cards, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterranean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, manga, cards, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, manga, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

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International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

August 30-Sept 2: United States

DRAGON*CON 2002, Atlanta, Georgia. (2001: 20,000). Organisers: Dragon*Con, PO Box 16459, Atlanta, GA 30321-9998. Tel: 001 770 909 0115 fax: 001 770 909 0112. E-mail: dragoncon@dragoncon.org Website: www.dragoncon.org

September: Norway

RAPTUS INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL. (2001 est: 4000). Organisers: Raptus Bergen Comics Festival, PO Box 768, Central 5807 Bergen, Norway. Tel/fax: 0047 55 32 88 55. E-mail: awa@hib.no Website: www.raptus.no Date: TBA

October 12-13: Belgium

FACTS 2002, ICC Citadelpark, 9000 Ghent. (2001 est: 3,000). Organisers: Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: 0032 2 534 63 67 fax 0032 2 538 24 52. E-mail: Emmanuel.Vanmelkebeke@pi.be Website: www.facts-convention.com

October: Poland

THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF COMICS. (2001 est: unknown). Organisers: Lodzki Dom Kultury, ul. Traugutta 18, 90-113 Lodz, Poland. Tel: 0042 633 98 00 ext 244 or 247. E-mail: festiwal@ldk.lodz.pl Date: TBA

October 31-November 3: Italy

LUCCA COMICS. (2001 est: 45,000) Organisers: Lucca Comics, Via della Cavallerizza 11, 55100 Lucca, Italy. Tel: 0039 583 48522 fax: 0039 583 91203. E-mail: comics@comune.lucca.it Website: www.comune.lucca.it/italiano/turismo.htm

October-November: Portugal

AMADORA '02. (2001 est: unknown) Organisers: Festival Internacional de Banda Desenhada da Amadora, av do Brasil 52-A, 2700-134 Amadora. Tel: 00351 21 499 8910 fax: 00351 21 496 2353. E-mail: bd.amadora@ mail.telepac.pt Website: www.cm-amadora.pt Date: TBA

November 16-17: England

MEMORABILIA '02, NEC, Birmingham. (2001: 19,351). Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: www.memorabilia.co.uk

November: France

THE THIRD ANGLO-SAXON COMIC & BY-PRODUCT CONVENTION. (2001 est: 2500) Organisers: Association Oméga, 54 avenue de Verdun, 59300 Valenciennes, France. Tel: 0033 3 27 29 08 71 fax: 0033 3 27 47 97 72. E-mail: jerome.fougnies@wanadoo.fr or frank.blas@wanadoo.fr Date: TBA

November: Finland

THE 17TH HELSINKI COMICS FESTIVAL. (Previous: 20,000). Organisers: The Finnish Comics Society, PO Box 927, FIN 00101 Helsinki, Finland. Tel/fax: 00358 9 685 6100. E-mail: raju@kaapeli.fi Website: www.kupla.net/fest or www.worldcomics.fi Date: TBA

January: France

ANGOULEME BD. (2002 est: 194,000). Organisers: Festival International de la Bande Dessinee, 2 Place d l'Hotel de Ville, 16000 Angouleme, France. Tel: 0033 05 45 97 86 50 fax: 0033 05 45 95 99 28. E-mail: info@bdangouleme.com Website: www.bdangouleme.com Date: TBA

February: United States

MEGACON 2002, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida. (2002 est: unknown). Organisers MegaCon 2001, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, Florida 34677, USA. Tel: 001 813 891 1702 fax: 001 813 891 1702. E-mail: beth@megaconvention.com Website: www.megaconvention.com Date: TBA

March: England

MEMORABILIA '03, NEC, Birmingham. (2002: 17,812). Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: www.memorabilia.co.uk Date: TBA

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensly, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact phone numbers are given where readily available.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant) (00)1 516 656 5000

AiT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels) (00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative and graphic novels) (00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked) (00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach, Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour) (00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, Illinois, IL 61802 (horror fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2211

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and related humour titles) (00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, PO Box 6191, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles) (00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related)

CROSSGENERATION COMICS, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy adventure) (00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure) (00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure titles, licensed, US and Japanese manga) (00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DISNEY COMICS, 500 South Buena Vista Street, Burbank, CA 91521 (humour titles) (00)1 818 507 5739

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4SB (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 2750 14th Avenue, Suite 302, Markham, Ontario L3R 0B6, Canada

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and merchandise) (00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult) (00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror) (00)1 212 807 7100

HARVEY COMICS ENTERTAINMENTS, 100 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 91401 (humour) (00)1 310 451 3377

HEAVY METAL, 100 Merrick Road, Suite 400 East, The Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions) (00)1 516 594 2130

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions) (00)1 714 2880200

IMAGE COMICS, 1440 North Harbor Boulevard, Suite 305, Fullerton, CA 92835 (adventure) (00)1 714 2880200

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 10th Floor, East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed) (00)1 212 696 0808

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure) (00)1 503 233 1377

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB 117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 348 7195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 128, Stanhope, NJ 07874 (adult)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 848 The Almeda, San Jose, CA 95126 (black and white fantasy) (00)1 408 279 0451

TOP COW, 10390 Santa Monica Boulevard #110, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (adventure and licensed)

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical) (00)1 770 425 0551

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 1812 Park Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina, NC 27605 (comics feature magazines) (00)1 919 833 8092

VEROTIK PRESS, PO Box 64859, Los Angeles, CA 07043 (adult fantasies)

VIZ COMICS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 43 Haight Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-offs) (00)1 914 473 9277

WILDSTORM, 7910 Ivanhoe Street, #438 La Jolla, CA 92037 (includes ABC, Cliffhanger and Homage DC subsidiary imprints)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK newsstand comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

DC THOMSON, Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure comics, pocket books and annuals)

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, 25-31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SU (humour, licensed and pre-school titles) 020 7344 6400

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (2000 AD graphic novels) 020 7531 8584

I FEEL GOOD LTD, 9 Dollington Street, London EC1V 0BQ (Viz) 020 7687 7000

JOHN BROWN PUBLISHING, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, London SW6 (albums) 020 7381 6007

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour and underground comix, graphic novels) 020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent KT2 5UJ (humour and adventure titles, Marvel licensed) 01892 500 100

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX11QN (Judge Dredd Megazine and 2000 AD) 01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Minsterley Hall, Shrewsbury SY5 0AA (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 792660

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comic magazines, books and graphic novels) 0161 833 2664

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics) 020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums) (0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 66 rue Bonaparte, 75006, Paris (albums and manga) (0033) 1 40 51 28 00

DARGAUD, 6 rue Gager Gabillot, 75015 Paris (albums and manga) (0033) 1 40 45 35 39

DELCOURT, 5 passage du Mont-Cenis, 75018 Paris (albums and comics) (0033) 1 53 41 86 10

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums) (0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy les Moulineaux (albums and manga) (0033) 1 41 46 11 11

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 24 avenue Philippe Auguste, 75011 Paris (albums)(0033) 1 44 93 88 33

MARVEL, BP 62, 06702 St Laurent Duvar (0033) 1 92 12 57 57

SEMIC FRANCE, 45 rue Broca, 75005 Paris (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 1 43 36 32 00

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics) (0039) 02 96480403

MARVEL ITALIA, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Marvel licensed titles)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed) fax: (0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums) 0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums) 0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s = wholesale available
dis = bulk discount terms
cat = phone/write for catalogue
s-cat = sae for catalogue
wants = wants lists accepted
s-wants = sae with wants lists
CoBRA = Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
cc = major credit cards accepted
sae = send stamped, addressed envelope with your enquiry

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Incognito, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through Detective Comics #225 (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and Showcase #4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Cosmic Comics, PO Box 1771, London E17 9PW (cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 8527 7824

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Incognito, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

Silver & Bronze Comics, PO Box 5528, Derby DE1 9HP (cat, 1950-1979) 01332 743758

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970 to date: From Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Gimmick Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

DBF Comics Mail Order, Tudor Books, 116 High Street, Weston Super Mare BS23 (s-cat, s-wants)

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Comix-shop.co.uk, 39 The Beeches, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6PB (wants, cat, cc)

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QJ (cc, CoBRA) 020 7924 3609

Comix-shop.co.uk, 39 The Beeches, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6PB (wants, cat, cc)

86th Floor Comics & Cards, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE78TR (dis,cat,cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG (s-cat cc) 020 7497 2150

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness St, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ (s-cat, cc, CoBRA) 020 7485 9320

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n, cat) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP. (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Incognito, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 01487 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Rd, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 71 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1DG (cat) 020 7497 2150 (fax: 7497 2632)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Rd, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market St, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a 6-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: Listings@comicsinternational.com

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

• All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

• FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) ..... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
(ii) List ads: (including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) ..... £10.00 ($15.00 US)

Payment (to Comics International) must accompany advertising copy.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

Collection clearout: 100s of current and older titles, from as little as 50p, 75p and £1 each. Includes **Origin**, **Green Arrow** (Smith run), **Midnight Nation**, **Astro City**, **Animal Man** (Morrison), **Doom Patrol** (Arcudi/Huat), **Hellblazer**, **Darkminds**, **JLA** (Morrison), **Liberty Meadows**, **Rising Stars**, **SIP**. Plus lots of other Marvel Knights, Imkage, Oni, Vertigo, Dark Horse and other titles. Graphic novels, one-shots and minis. For full list, send an sae to Brett Sullivan, 8 Spencer Court, Merton, Southsea, Hants PO5 2AJ. Get the bargains while you can, and so cheap you can try something new!

For sale: Private collection of X Files comics, magazines, videos, trading cards, CCGs, action figures, autographs and memorabilia, These include complete collections of US comics (issue -2 to 42, including limited editions), UK comics (manga and Titan), trading cards (Topps) seasons 1-3 and many others. Over 400 items: all of high quality. Would ideally like to sell collection complete, so if you are interested please send an sae to Tim Toone, 17 The Brambles, Littleport, Ely, Cambrideshire CB6 1XH or e-mail t.toone@virgin.net.

For sale: Green Lantern power battery prop – Hal Jordan version! You can bid for this ultra rare item on eBay between September 23 and 30. For more information, e-mail superginger@go.com. Item is in immaculate condition. Only available in the UK.

The Superhero Store (www.superherostore.co.uk) has thousands of UK and US comics, books and videos for sale, including Marvel US (**Marvel Graphic Novel** #1), Marvel UK (**Captain Britain** #1), DC US (**Sandman** #1), DC UK (**Superheroes** #1), Fleetway (**Starlord** #1), IPC (**Vulcan** #1), DC Thomson (1960s **Beano**), Image (**Darker Image** #1 – gold bagged), Topps (**Cowboy Library** #1), Apocalypse (**Toxic!** #1), Marvel video (1960s Spider-Man), DC video (1960s Superboy), sci-fi video (Ulysses 31 volume 1) and many more. Visit www.superherostore.co.uk, e-mail enquiries@superherostore.co.uk or send a large sae to C. Smillie, Flat 1, 51 Cross Street, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 8ET.

For sale: Trade paperbacks, periodicals and paraphernalia at prices held over from last century! And what's more, if I like the cut of your jib, all post and packing will be free! Please call 07720 130658 or write to Mr Mark S. Brooklyn Esq., 117 Barbara Square, Hucknall, Nottingham NG15 8AP for more information.

For sale **Kirby Hunter Dogs** graphic novel. EC slip-cased library boxed sets: **Tales from the Crypt**, **Piracy**, **Aces High Psychoanalysis** and **Extra!** (all shrink-wrapped) **Shock Suspense Stories**, **Sandman** and **Death** first print hardcovers, some signed. BWS **Weapon X** hardcover, **Bone** 1-3 hardcovers, **Planetary** 1-3 hardcovers. Alan Moore Maxwell the Magic Cat signed sketch, Alan Moore novel/uncorrected proof **Voice from the Fire**. Gene Colan **Howard the Duck** signed sketch. John Burns *Space 1999*/**Look-In** painted page. John Bolton signed prints. **Vampirella** limited hardcover, various artists. Warren Ellis/**Lazarus Churchyard** original graphic novel. For prices call 0121 426 5506 or e-mail edgeworks@hotmail.com.

Sets for sale: **Hulk** 279-377 (45 issues) £35, **Fantastic Four** 279-377 (42) £30, **Iron Man** 164-239 (52) £30, **Captain America** 605-412 (36) £20, **Thor** 364-497 (45) £30, **Avengers** 263-376 (100) £40, **Excalibur** 1-23 £20, **Daredevil** 252-282 (26) £20, **Cloak & Dagger** 1-15 £15, **Strange Tales** 1-19 (13) £10, **Psi Force** 1-31 and 1st annual (32) £25, **Amazing Spider-Man** 197, 231, 270, 274, 276, 277, 278 x 2, 279, 280, 284, 290, 295, 297 (14) £30, **Fantastic Four** volume 3 1-19 £20,. Also sets of **Punisher**, **Dragonball Z**, **Pokemon**, **Oh My Goddess!**, **Uncanny X-Men**, McFarlane's **Spider-Man** 298-329, and many more! Call Kal on 0121 360 2397 or 07879 651340.

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: Any artwork by Peter Elson at a reasonable price. I would be grateful for any information regarding how I can get hold of his work. Write to Roger Newson, 32 Rosemary Avenue, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 9HX with details.

Wanted: Warren **Heidi Saha** magazine and poster. Contact Piers with any information on 07860 642009.

Wanted: Dan Dare Hawke books, any. Original art by Joe Colquhoun and Mike Western. Any issues of **Misty**, **Scream** and **Thunder**. Write to David McDonald, Cappagh, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, Ireland. Or call 00353 94 35268 after 7pm.

Wanted: **Thundercats**, **Centurions**, TV-type comics, **Roy of the Rovers** and **Hot-Shot**. Private collector also seeking specials. High prices paid. Contact Don MacDonald, 124 Drummore Road, Glasgow G15 7NJ. Tel: 0141 949 1980.

Wanted: **Misty** or **Jinty** comics and annuals. Please e-mail sirfarosa@yahoo.com.

Wanted: British weekly comics: **TV Comic**, **Beezer**, **Topper**, **Huckleberry Hound**, **Yogi Bear** (plus holiday specials) from the 1960s only. Dell, Gold Key and Archie 80-Page Giant Specials. Gold Key: **Mr Ed**, **The Munsters**, **Bewitched**, **Rawhide**, **Supercar**, **Fireball XL5**. Bettie Page photo magazines. Movie magazines from the 1950s. Top condition only. Contact John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Wanted: Warrens, **Eerie** #64, 71, 85, 88, 110, 138, **Creepy** #146. Phone Ken on 01202 886373 (daytime) or 01202 886405 (evenings).

Announcements

Writer seeks artist to collaborate on superhero/P.I. series, looking to bring a new style to the genre. If interested contact steverefa@supanet.com

For all the best indie comics from the UK and Ireland, visit www.tgtokyo.com. We also have imports from the US and the Continent, and we run comics events every two months. Plus! Exclusive material from lots of creators, including Nigel Auchterlounie, Malcy Duff and Andy Ross.

Writers, creators, artists, etc of UK superheroes (eg Electroman, Ace Hart, Mr Apollo, etc) from the 1940s to the 1960s sought. Please contact enquiries@superherostore.co.uk or call 07816 484327. Do you own any issues from this period? Like to see them reprinted? Then please contact me at Flat 1, 51 Cross Street, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 8ET.

Artists wanted to illustrate **Doom Patrol**-ish weird superheroes series **Rebecca Black** for submission to various publishers and possible small press publication. Send art samples and an sae to Sam Johnson, 2 Pembroke Mansions, 16 Canfield Gardens, London NW6 3JX.

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PARIS, 1933. But this is a world where magic is real and the city is ravaged by feudalism, where foul sorcerers stalk the streets and secret societies vie for control.

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View Brother Matthew online at: www.shrunkenheadstudios.com

MY GOD...WHAT IS THIS?
IT'S COMMON FOR SECRET BROTHERHOODS AND GUILDS TO TATTOO THEIR INITIATES.
THESE ARE THE MARKS OF A SORCERER

Rex Mundi: Brother Matthew is copyright Shrunken Head Studios. Script: Arvid Nelson. Art: Eric J. Colouring: Asa Taylor.

NOW READ ON . . .

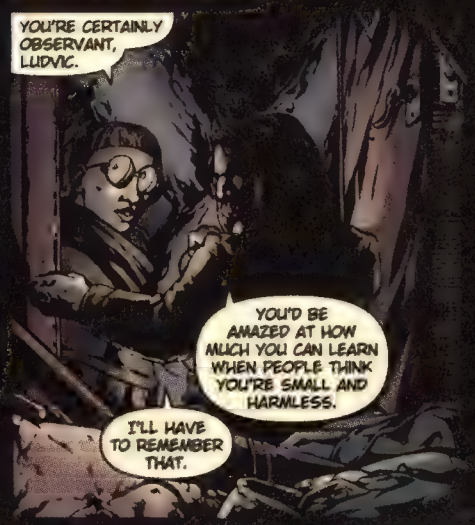
CHAPTER
Twenty One

SO WHO THE HELL WAS JEAN-CHRISTOPH?

GOD KNOWS... PROBABLY A GUILD SORCERER WHO - SOMEHOW, FOR WHATEVER REASON - STOLE THE ELECTRUM RING AND WENT ON THE RUN.
THE GUILD OBVIOUSLY CAUGHT UP WITH HIM.
MAGICIANS NEVER SHARE THEIR SECRETS.

YOU KNOW...
YES?

IT'S PROBABLY NOTHING, BUT OUR MAGICIAN, FOUCHET... I'VE SEEN HIM LEAVING HIS WAGON AT NIGHT. USUALLY DOESN'T RETURN TIL MORNING.
WHERE'S HIS WAGON?
NOT FAR FROM HERE. HE LEAVES AROUND TEN, AND IT'S ABOUT QUARTER-TO NOW.

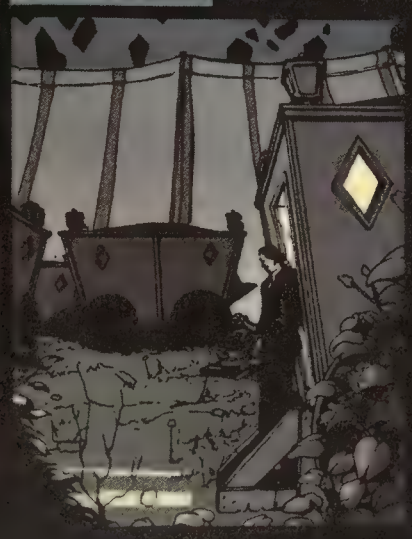

YOU'RE CERTAINLY OBSERVANT, LUDVIC.
YOU'D BE AMAZED AT HOW MUCH YOU CAN LEARN WHEN PEOPLE THINK YOU'RE SMALL AND HARMLESS.
I'LL HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT.

CHAPTER
Twenty Two

WHAT'S YOUR PROFESSION, LUDVIC?
JUGGLER. WHEN I'M NOT ONSTAGE, I HELP THE PROFESSOR RUN THE WORLD OF WONDERS.
YOU SEEM UNDERVALUED. WHY NOT GO SOMEWHERE ELSE?
I... IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME.

CIRCUMSTANCES AREN'T IDEAL, BUT AT LEAST THIS WAY I GET PAID FOR BEING STARED AT AND CALLED A FREAK.

WELL, BLESSED ARE THE MEEK...
SURE HOPE SO. SPEAKING OF WHICH, HERE'S FOUCHET.



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POF!

Chapter XXIII
ALL DRESSED UP. WHERE'S HE GOING?
HE'S A MAJOR DRAW FOR US. WOMEN CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF HIM.
LET'S GO.
CHAPTER XXIIII
SKREEK SKEEK
SAFE TO SAY HE ISN'T GOING ANYWHERE. LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

Comic & Card Events

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DOORS OPEN 12 NOON

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BABYLON 5
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BUFFY
COMIC BOOK SUPPLIES
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FUTURE DATE: 1ST DECEMBER 2002

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FUTURE DATE: 5TH JANUARY 2003

Dealers: for table availability phone 020 747 66 873

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

August

31/8 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p52)

September

1/9 London: Comicbook Marketplace, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street (p66)
1/9 Watford: Sci-Fi & Comic Collectors Fair, Watford Leisure Centre, Horseshoe Lane, Garston ..... (p47)
7/9 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p52)
8/9 Bristol: Sci-Fi & Comic Collectors Fair, Holiday Inn, Victoria Street .. (p23)
14/9 Birmingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Church Centre, Carrs Lane (p52)
15/9 Cheshunt: Sci-Fi & Comic Collectors Fair, Grundy Leisure Centre, Windmill Lane ..... (p47)
20-22/9 Milton Keynes: Collectormania, with special guests, Middleton Hall, Milton Keynes Shopping Centre ..... (p47)
28/9 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p52)
29/9 Basildon: Trading Card, Sci-Fi, Movie & Collectors Show, Basildon Sports Centre, Nethermayne ..... (p33)
29/9 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p52)
29/9 London: London Art, Book & British Comic Show, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p34)
29/9 Newport: Sci-Fi & Comic Collectors Fair, Newport Leisure Centre ... (p23)

October

5/10 Glasgow: Scottish Comics, Card & Collectables Fair, James Moir Hall (Mitchell Theatre) Granville Street ..... (p35)
5/10 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p52)
6/10 London: The National Comicbook Marketplace and Card Mart, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)
6/10 Reading: Sci-Fi & Comic Collectors Fair, Rivermead Leisure Complex, Richfield Avenue ..... (p47)
13/10 Watford: Sci-Fi & Comic Collectors Fair, Watford Leisure Centre, Horseshoe Lane, Garston ..... (p47)
19/10 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p52)
20/10 Cheshunt: London International Action Man Day, Wolsey Hall, Windmill Lane, Cheshunt ..... (p47)
20/10 Cheshunt: Sci-Fi & Comic Collectors Fair, Grundy Leisure Centre, Windmill Lane ..... (p47)
26/10 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p52)
27/10 Cardiff: Sci-Fi & Comic Collectors Fair, Jurys Hotel, Mary Ann St .. (p23)
27/10 London: Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London ..... (p66)

November

2/11 Sheffield: Comic Mart & Card Show, Main Hall, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street ..... (p52)
3/11 Cheshunt: European Transformers Convention, Wolsey Hall, Windmill Lane, Cheshunt ..... (p47)
3/11 London: Comicbook Marketplace, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street (p66)
9/11 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p52)
10/11 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p52)
16-17/11 Birmingham: Memorabilia '02, Birmingham NEC ..... (p22)
23/11 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p52)
24/11 Basildon: Trading Card, Sci-Fi, Movie & Collectors Show, Basildon Sports Centre, Nethermayne ..... (p33)
24/11 Cardiff: Sci-Fi & Comic Collectors Fair, Angel Hotel, Westgate Street (p47)
30/11 Birmingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Church Centre, Carrs Lane (p52)
30/11 Glasgow: Scottish Comics, Card & Collectables Fair, James Moir Hall (Mitchell Theatre) Granville Street ..... (p35)

Please note: the above listing of UK comics, trading card and related events is free to Comics International display advertisers only.

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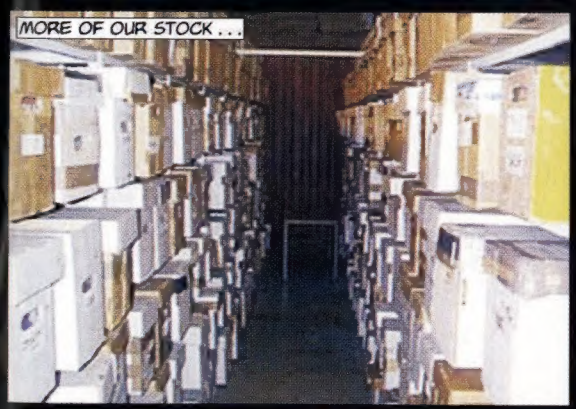

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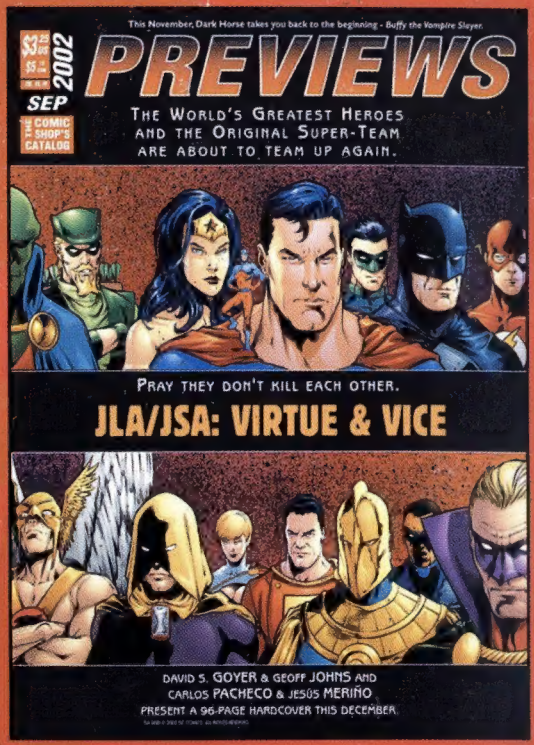
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